

READER



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ARCHITECTURE

10 Power This year's Chicago Architecture Biennial may end the unstoppable homage to dead white men and narratives that neglect how architecture has victimized communities of color.

THIS WEEK ON CHICAGOREADER.COM



The B-52s gave Chicago one last gift at Riot Fest

Even if they really are retiring from the road, they've left a permanent mark on the city through their influence on house music.



Dog days of summer

We swung by Guaranteed Rate Field on White Sox Dog Day to capture baseball's fuzziest fans.



Inside the Feast festival

AMFM brought food, art, and music to Homan Square Park to call attention to food insecurity on the west and south sides.

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FRIDAY 9.20

JENNY LEWIS

MARGO PRICE / LOLA KIRKE

ROOKIE / DOGS AT LARGE / CAFE RACER

SATURDAY 9.21

KURT VILE AND THE VIOLATORS

PRIESTS / THE BUDOS BAND / BEN PIRANI

MANWOLVES / ROY KINSEY / TATIANA HAZEL

GOOSEISLAND.COM/312BLOCKPARTY

CITY LIFE

PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

Feast your eyes

Don't miss these art exhibitions.

EVERY SEPTEMBER NAVY Pier is flooded with gallerygoers from Chicago locals to people from abroad walking through the maze of booths at the International Exposition of Contemporary and Modern Art (Expo Chicago). More than 100 booths showing and selling contemporary visual work from international galleries are situated inside Festival Hall at Navy Pier. This year's Expo conveniently coincides with the Chicago Architecture Biennial, where creatives have no excuse but to wan-

der through gallery spaces and attend lectures by prominent artists.

This isn't to say that Expo is here to dominate the month. Smaller DIY spaces like Pilsen's Baby Blue Gallery and Humboldt Park's New Works are also opening shows, and Julius Caesar in East Garfield Park has created its own miniature art fair called Barely Fair. Galleries all over the city have capitalized on making their showrooms a destination point in the upcoming weeks. If you're looking to escape the glitz and glam of Expo, the Franklin's "Outliers (Q3-Q1)" is a show presenting artists from regions in political turmoil, and Wicker Park's Heaven Gallery's "Knows No Bounds" looks at how experiencing art has been influenced by technology. Here are some more exhibitions we encourage you to check out. —**S. NICOLE LANE AND SALEM COLLO-JULIN**

WESTERN EXHIBITIONS

Through 11/2:
Orkideh Torabi, "Heaven on Earth"
Ruby T, "Underwater Flood"
1709 W. Chicago, suite 2C
312-480-8390
westernexhibitions.com
Tue-Sat 11 AM-6 PM

PRAIRIE CHICAGO

Through 10/27:
Joel Dean, "Evolve
Right Now"

2055 W. Cermak
prairie.website
Sun 1-4 PM; Thu 6-9 PM

JULIUS CAESAR

Through 10/20:
"Barely Fair," miniature
art fair with two dozen
art galleries and project
spaces with works exhib-
ited in 1:12 scale booths.
3311 W. Carroll
barelyfair.com
Fri 6-10 PM; Sat 11

AM-7 PM; Sun 1-4 PM
or by appointment

BABY BLUE GALLERY

Through 11/6:
"I Know You Would Never
Laugh at Me," group exhib-
ition with artists Dar-
ius Airo, Spencer Har-
ris, and Kaitlin Smrcina;
opens Fri 9/20, 7-11 PM.
2201 S. Halsted
540-230-7822
babybluegallery.com
Sun 1-3 PM or by
appointment

MARIANE IBRAHIM

Through 10/26:
Ayana V. Jackson, "Take
Me to the Water"; opens
Fri 9/20, 6-8 PM.
437 N. Paulina
312-877-5436
marianeibrahim.com
By appointment

NEW WORKS

Through 10/20:
Vincent Larouche, "Coch/
lear/sweat"; opens
Sat 9/21, 6-10 PM.
3403 W. Grand
newworksprojects.com
Sun 1-4 PM or by
appointment



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PRODUCE MODEL GALLERY

Through 11/30:
Maggie Crowley and Javi-
er Bosques, "New Again,"
and Iria Prieto and Chris-
tian Diaz, "Vía"; open
Sat 9/21, 7-10 PM.
1007 W. 19th
646-872-7692
produce-model.com
Fri-Sat noon-5 PM or
by appointment

THE FRANKLIN

Through 10/27:
"Outliers (Q3-Q1)," group
show with Aman Mojadidi,
Azadeh Gholizadeh, Khalil
Chishtee, and Sana Kazi.
3522 W. Franklin
thefranklinout-
door.tumblr.com
Sat 2-4 PM and by
appointment

CORBETT VS. DEMPSEY

Through 10/12:
Carol Jackson, "End
World Music"
2156 W. Fulton
773-278-1664
corbettvsdempsey.com
Tue-Sat 10 AM-5 PM
and by appointment

HEAVEN GALLERY

Through 10/20:
"Knows No Bounds,"
group exhibition with work
by Mike Rea, Gwendo-
lyn Zabicki, and more.

1550 N. Milwau-
kee, second floor
773-342-4597
heavengallery.com
Fri-Sat 1-6 PM; Sun 1-5
PM or by appointment

AGITATOR: A CO-OP- ERATIVE GALLERY

Through 10/6:
"Everything Has Changed:
Life Altering Health Care
Experiences in 21st Centu-
ry USA," group exhibition
1112 N. Ashland
agitatorgallery.com
Mon, Wed 6-9 PM; Tue
6-7 PM; Fri 5-8 PM; third
and fourth Sat 2-5 PM
or by appointment

CO-PROSPERITY SPHERE

Through 10/2:
"Now What?! Advocacy,
Activism, and Allianc-
es in American Architec-
ture since 1968," organized
in part by ArchiteXX
10/3-11/16:
Work by the late Sabina
Ott in the window spaces
10/12-10/31:
"Networks of Resistance,"
group show of activist art-
ists and collectives includ-
ing work by members of the
Justseeds Artists' Cooper-
ative, William Estrada, and
the Art Build Workers.
3219 S. Morgan
773-823-9700
coprosperity.org

Thu 11 AM-7 PM; Sun noon-
5 PM or by appointment

THE RENAISSANCE SOCIETY

Through 12/1:
LaToya Ruby Frazier,
"The Last Cruze"
University of Chicago
Cobb Hall, fourth floor
5811 S. Ellis
773-702-8670
renaissancesociety.org
Tue-Wed, Fri 10 AM-5
PM; Thu 10 AM-8 PM;
Sat-Sun noon-5 PM

SULLIVAN GALLERIES, SCHOOL OF THE ART INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO

Through 10/12:
"Envisioning Justice: New
Visions Beyond Incar-
ceration by Chicago Art-
ists and Communities"
33 S. State, seventh floor
312-629-6635
saic.edu/sullivan-galleries
Tue-Sat 11 AM-6 PM

LOGAN CENTER FOR THE ARTS

Through 10/27
"Tufting Gun Tapestries,"
experiments in textiles
915 E. 60th
773-834-8377
arts.uchicago.edu/
logan-center/next
Tue-Sat 9 AM-9 PM; Sun 11
AM-9 PM

artist, writer, performer?

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RESTAURANT REVIEW

Tortello is Wicker Park's anti-Target

A tiny pasta specialist puts on a show.

By **MIKE SULA**

There's something perfectly peak Wicker Park about a rigorously executed old-world Italian pastificio that offers zoodles in meat sauce along with casarecce, chiusoni, and lumache. I've lurked outside the Division Street storefront window of Tortello long enough to see those rare pasta shapes hand-formed by humans, but it seems the zucchini noodles are prepped in back, far away from the authenticity police but no more than a meatball's throw from a hundred keto-crazed stroller moms.

Tortello is in some ways a throwback to what Division Street used to be, nestled more comfortably on the same block next to the old Alliance Bakery and Zakopane than it is to Target and Starbucks. It's the brainchild of Italian expat Dario Monni and his Chicago-born spouse, Jill Gray, who imagine a time and place when you went to one place for your pasta, one place for your pastry, and one place for your boilermaker.

Putting live humans on stage in the window making pasta is a promotional act worthy of P.T. Barnum, just as mesmerizing but far more appetizing than ogling a Fiji mermaid.

"I was looking for a big window," says Monni. "If I have a beautiful piece of art is it gonna go in the bathroom or the living room?"

And unlike a carny act, the display is meant to highlight the thorough effort the couple has made, going so far as to host Lilla Simone, a real Italian grandma and *sfoglina*, or pasta maker, to train the staff. Simone has since returned to Puglia, but the daily results of her three proteges are on grand display under the glass counter in this slim space: flour-dusted ivory tangles of bucatini, piled paccheri, and/or coils of fusilli, all sold by the pound next to containers of sauce.

But you can also choose to stay put, order one of a half dozen made-to-order pasta



Top left: sfogline Frederic Voglesong and head sfoglina/pastry chef Alex Mulgrove; top right: burrata-stuffed tortelli with sage, butter, and crushed hazelnuts; below: shaping a tortelli

© MATTHEW GILSON

dishes, and stake a claim on a stool behind the sfoglina in the window (though if you're ordering zucchini noodles in a pasta shop, I suggest you eat your shame at one of the less prominent tables near the back).

Even by Italian standards, the pasta prepared and served in-house under the supervision of executive chef Duncan Biddulph (Lula, Rootstock, the Kinmont) is assiduously al dente.

Chewy nubs of ribbed chiusoni nestle in a golden, mellow, sausage-spickled saffron cream; prosciutto-stuffed, mushroom sauce-slathered capelli del prete ("hats of the priest") audibly snap on contact with dental enamel. The signature tortelli is dressed with a classic northern Italian profile—sage, butter, and crushed hazelnuts—but filled with a gooey burst of burrata, a southern Italian cheese in origin. ➔

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Chiusoni drying (top) and plated with sausage and saffron cream  MATTHEW GILSON

continued from 5

The last bit jumped out at a certain pasta brownshirt of my acquaintance who was offended that a cheese defined by its cool, fresh liquidity would be imprisoned by dough and compromised by boiling water like some lowly pierogi—but unless you're a cheese maker it's difficult to get mad about it.

After leaving Lula, Biddulph reportedly took an immersive tour of the Boot, and at the moment this has contributed to a few simple, hyperseasonal, local, and superflavorful vegetable sides, such as chunks of lightly sauteed eggplant tossed with nutty green chickpeas and ricotta salata, or bitter rapini with meaty

vinegar-cooked and olive oil-preserved mushrooms and neonata, a briny, spicy Calabrian condiment of baby fish and chile oil.

Tall, airy focaccia with a discernible crunch and smeared with house-made ricotta and Wisconsin honey is a standout ancillary carb, though other bites—Castelvetro olives or Reggiano and balsamic or a seasonal granita of the day—provide more balance. Less perishably, a focused collection of Italian beers, wines, and digestivos can complete an idyllic session in this specialized, immersive pasta performance. 

 @MikeSula



Nightline coanchor Byron Pitts, what are you looking at Rahm?, and Democracy for America chief executive Yvette Simpson
COURTESY ABC

POLITICS

The Rahm advice

Hey, Dems: If you want to beat Trump, don't listen to Rahm.

By BEN JORAVSKY

When Mayor Rahm left office, my friends and colleagues consoled me, as though I'd lost my reason for existence.

"What now, my friend—what are you gonna do now?"

I reminded them that they'd asked me the same question eight years ago, when Mayor Daley gave way to Rahm.

But I understood their concern—I think I may have ripped Rahm even more than Daley. Though it's close.

And then, as if the TV gods were looking down on me, ABC hired Rahm as a contributor. And there he was last week, offering pre- and postdebate advice on what Democrats must do to defeat Donald Trump.

And just like that—man, I'm back in the Rahm-ripping business!

OK, let me make one thing perfectly clear, to quote Richard Nixon . . .

I do not in any way begrudge Rahm for getting that gig or ABC for offering it to him. With his nervous, giggly edginess, he is kind of entertaining.

My greater concern has to do with my beloved Democratic Party. Please, Dems, please—whatever you do, don't take Rahm's advice.

As much as possible, go in the opposite direction of the way he recommends. Unless, of course, you want to help Trump win reelection.

As exhibit A for why I say this, consider the following exchange between Mayor Rahm and Yvette Simpson in ABC's predebate show from last Thursday.

Simpson is the chief executive of Democracy for America, a progressive PAC created by former Vermont governor Howard Dean.

On a tangent—Dean and Rahm are old adversaries. Dean may dislike Mayor Rahm even more than most Chicagoans—as hard as that is to imagine.

Anyway, in the predebate show, Simpson was making the perfectly sensible argument that the key to Democratic victory in 2020 is to energize and bring out the base.

Here's how she put it: "I think progressives are really where the energy is right now. And

I think if, if you can expand the electorate, which is what I saw in '08, bringing out new voters, particularly Brown and Black voters, young voters. Energize the base, where you don't have to change your message much, right? Just go ahead and get those voters excited—we can win."

Simpson hadn't even finished her comments when Rahm started shaking his head. Here's his rebuttal: "First of all, Donald Trump's gonna do a great job turning out our vote. And in '08 as well as '92, '96 and in '12, [we won] because both Bill Clinton and Barack Obama brought other people—not just people in the party—other people to the party."

In other words, if you fire up the base it's bad. 'Cause you'll automatically turn off moderate or independents. So shut up, base, and get in line!

Give Rahm credit for consistency. He's been at war with the Democratic left-of-center base since his days as a Clinton White House aide in the 90s.

It would take Dr. Freud to figure out exactly why he hates the base so much. But his general attitude toward lefties is that they have no choice but to vote Democrat, so fuck 'em.

And then once in office, his attitude is fuck 'em some more. You know, just 'cause you can.

If Donald Trump had a similar attitude toward his Republican base, he'd be telling Alabamians: "Kiss my ass, you redneck mother[bleeps]. . ."

It should be possible for Democrats to offer progressive proposals that fire up the base

and bring over some moderates. You shouldn't have to sell your political soul to convince suburban swing voters that the current occupant of the White House is a freaking lunatic.

Now that I think about it, I can understand why Rahm's not big on whipping up the Democratic base. In his own career, he counted on them staying at home.

Think about it: He won in 2011 and was re-elected in 2015 largely because turnout was low.

If the base that Simpson talks about—younger voters, Blacks, Hispanics, progressives—had turned out strong in Chicago, there would be no Mayor Rahm. And he wouldn't have been able to get away with such mayoral misdeeds as, to pick two . . .

Reapproving the parking meter deal, burying evidence about Laquan McDonald's murder, and forking over \$2.4 billion in property taxes for the Lincoln Yards and 78 TIF deals.

OK, that's three misdeeds—four, if you count Lincoln Yards and the 78 as separate misdeeds. And I didn't even mention closing mental health clinics and then spying on protesters.

Now I'm up to five or six misdeeds. Better stop now before I get into the schools.

The point is, Dems like Rahm want a turnout, but not too much of a turnout.

It's the strategy Rahm followed in his two mayoral elections. He ran strongest in Lincoln Park and other upscale north-side enclaves that are like suburban swing districts in that they're filled with relatively well-to-do social liberals who don't really care about pocket-book issues. 'Cause they don't have to. And he used his ties to Barack Obama to bring out enough Black voters to win.

Sounds like Joe Biden's strategy. Which sounds like Hillary Clinton's strategy—and we all know how well that turned out. Don't we, President Trump?

When Rahm says, "Donald Trump's gonna do a great job turning out our vote," he's forgetting voters have a third choice besides voting Democratic or Republican. They can choose not to vote at all. As roughly 65 percent of Chicagoans did in the last few mayoral elections.

A low turnout may work wonders for Mayor Rahm. But it will be bad news for any Democrat running against Trump.

@joravben

ON CULTURE

Endangered: Chicago's 'best' postmodern building

As the Chicago Architecture Biennial opens, the Thompson Center faces another threat.

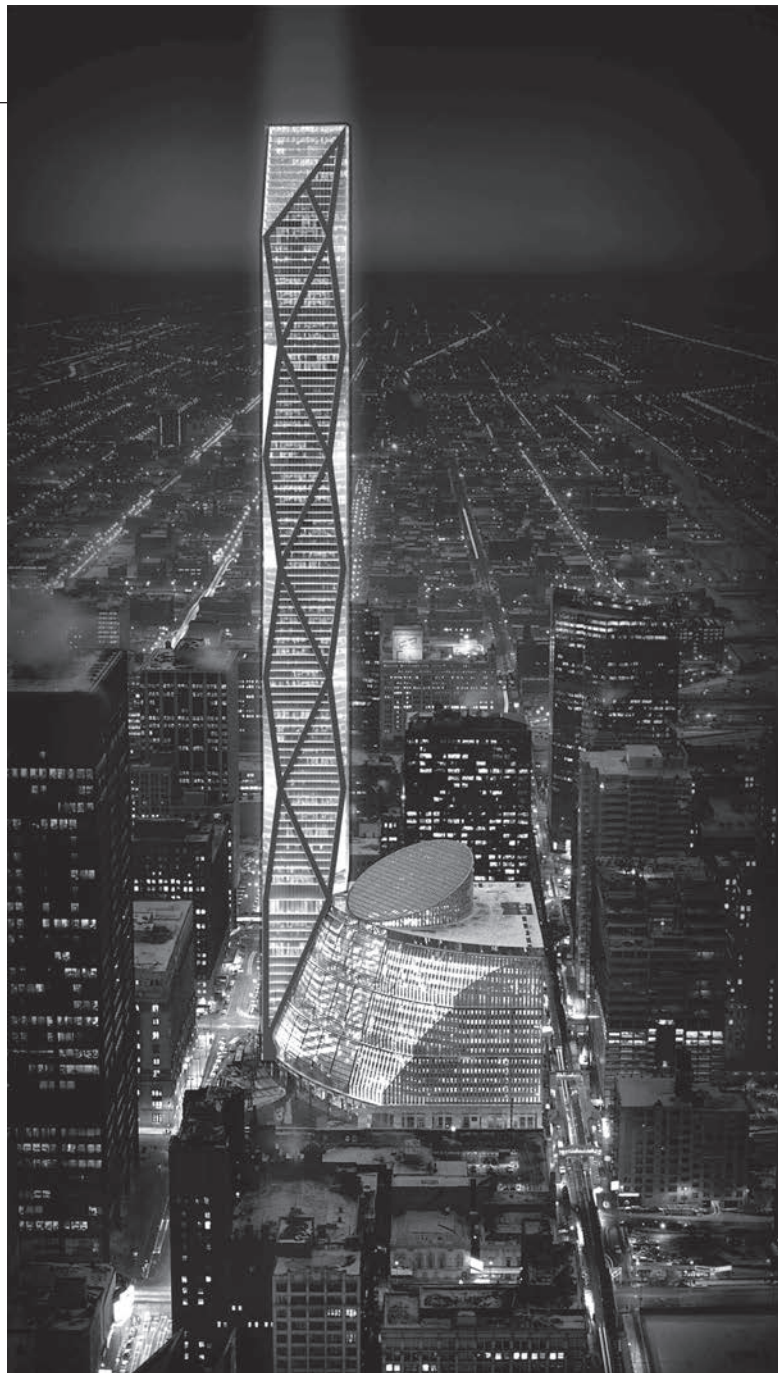
By DEANNA ISAACS

Hello, global visitors to the third Chicago Architecture Biennial. Welcome!

This year's event is all about the way architecture shapes and is shaped by culture, history, and nature.

It offers a bunch of exhibits and programs on that theme, right there at its central location, the beautiful beaux arts Chicago Cultural Center—once considered a disposable white elephant of a building.

There are dozens more at official partner locations around the city. As the biennial's title, "... And Other Such Stories," suggests, Chicago is full of opportunities to study the interplay of architecture with its urban and human environment, not all of them on the program.



Thompson Center architect Helmut Jahn's reuse proposal includes construction of a 109-floor tower.

COURTESY JAHN ARCHITECTURE

One of the most disturbing is playing out in real time just three short blocks from the biennial's main venue. To check it out, exit the Cultural Center on its north side and turn left, where a five-minute walk on Randolph Street will bring you face to face with what looks like an alien space transport vessel—a massive, squat, pink and bluish anomaly plopped down across from City Hall in the midst of Chicago's towering skyscrapers.

This is the James R. Thompson Center, the 17-story, 1.2-million-square-foot Chicago headquarters for the state of Illinois. Designed by German-born Chicago architect Helmut Jahn, it opened 34 years ago as a pathbreaking, environmentally innovative, socially progressive mixed-use government center—and was recently named by the National Trust for Historic Preservation as one of the 11 most endangered historic places in America.

It's a head turner from the outside, but you ain't seen nothin' yet. Cross the plaza at the corner of Randolph and Clark Streets, pass the lumpy Dubuffet sculpture *Monument With Standing Beast* standing guard there, enter through the revolving doors to the lobby, and look up.

In the city that gave birth to the skyscraper, this deceptively truncated runt of a structure houses the most spectacular indoor space—a vast, dizzying latticework atrium that pulls in the towers around it and soars from a bull's-eye blossom on its lower concourse straight up to the sky.

Jahn pulled off visual magic here, easily recognizable as the inspiration for his Sony

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Center in Berlin, an international tourist destination completed 15 years later on the site of the former Potsdamer Platz and the Berlin Wall.

The State of Illinois Center, as it was originally known (it was renamed in 1993 for the governor who commissioned it), was designed to honor the domes of historic public buildings, especially the rotunda of Henry Ives Cobb's 1905 Chicago Federal Building (at Adams and Dearborn, demolished in 1965), which was bigger than that of the U.S. capitol.

But Jahn was also breaking with tradition. He made the first two floors of the Thompson Center a multiuse hub of public activity, including retail, restaurants, and one of the city's busiest el stations. And he left every floor of the state offices that rose in concentric half circles above that commercial area open to it, as a symbol of and facilitator for a transparent, corruption-free Illinois state government.

Of course, it didn't exactly work out that way. "Transparent" and "corruption free" are not the first words that come to mind in the

state where, in recent history, four governors wound up in prison. The building didn't turn out to be perfect either. Its leading-edge heating and cooling systems proved to be nearly as flawed as the state's elected officials, and employees complained about food court odors and noise that wafts up over the open balconies to their offices. As the years went by and administrations changed, building maintenance that should have been routine was delayed and forgone.

It's not unheard of for older, lower-density Chicago buildings in desirable locations to be allowed to fall into such disrepair that their owners can justify booting the occupants and demolishing them. But it's jolting to learn that, just three and a half decades after the ribbon-cutting hoopla of its opening, this could be the fate of the Thompson Center.

In April, Governor J.B. Pritzker signed a law that authorizes sale of the building within two years—without any stipulation that forbids demolition. And in late August, he took the next step, issuing a request for proposals for a project manager to take charge of the sale and

the relocation of about 2,000 state employees. Blaming "prolonged deferred maintenance," he cited plans for using the proceeds of the sale to help stabilize the pension system. Proposals are due October 4.

Financials, including the cost of providing other office space for those 2,000 employees, are murky so far. Repair costs for the current building were estimated in 2016 at more than \$300 million, which seems like a lot. Pritzker's predecessor, Governor Bruce Rauner, who'd hoped to unload the building himself, had projected that it would *sell* for \$300 million.

Whatever the case, the state's unfunded pension liability is more than \$130 billion. So here's a question: How could the drop-in-a-bucket net gain from this sale be worth the loss of such a significant public space?

In 32 years of annual "most endangered" designations from the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the Thompson Center is the youngest building ever to make the list. It's also a prominent presence on the endangered lists of local activist groups Preservation Chicago and Landmarks Illinois (which, looking at

the environmental impact, estimates that demolishing the center would create 145 million pounds of waste).

They're all pushing for the governor to favor reuse in any possible sale. And Jahn himself drafted an eye-popping reuse plan that includes construction of an adjacent 109-floor office, hotel, and residential tower. But there's no sign so far that Pritzker's on board. When asked about demolition, the governor's office sent the following statement: "The Thompson Center is a valuable state asset, and this approach will make the sale in a responsible way for the state's finances. In selling the facility, the governor's goal is to balance all interests to maximize the benefit to Illinois taxpayers."

So take that short walk to see what the National Trust for Historic Preservation calls "Chicago's best example" of grand-scale post-modern architecture.

By the next biennial, in the city that's all about architecture, it could be gone. 

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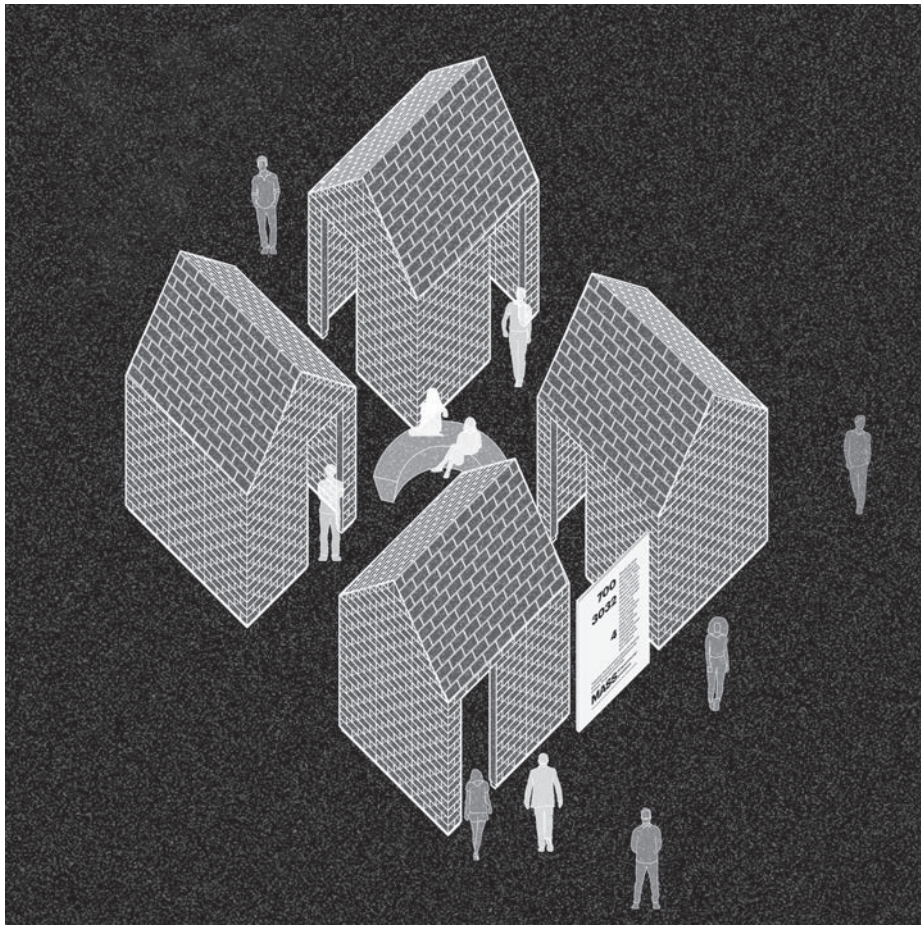
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The Gun Violence Memorial Project
MASS DESIGN GROUP

dead white men, a reminder of conventional narratives that neglect the myriad ways architecture has victimized communities of color or left them out entirely.

The 2017 edition included satellite locations that, as I wrote for the *Reader* at the time, were some of the redeeming elements of a lackluster exhibition. In that piece, I also posed two directions the biennial could take after 2017: the way of more easy-on-the-eyes architecture, filled with boat tours of tall buildings and endless installations of illegible design-speak you'd find at an insufferable cocktail hour; or toward an exhibition that inspires the public to see architecture and the building of cities as a part of a political process in which they have a megaphone.

The third edition of CAB promises to be just that. Curator Yesomi Umolu, director of the U. of C.'s Logan Center Exhibitions, together with Europe-based curator and educator Sepake Angiama and Brazilian architect Paulo Tavaré, has produced a show that appears to examine how architecture is addressing issues like land ownership, environmental degradation, erasure of peoples' histories, rights to housing, and more. Says Umolu, the biennial's theme, "... And Other Such Stories," "points to an expansive and inclusive view of architecture that explores the multiplicity of narratives that can describe our environments. The title is purposefully open-ended, suggesting an unfinished conversation."

Based on many of the contributors' projects, the theme references the ways architecture has been negligent of the environment and destructive to already-disinvested communities. It's these "other stories"—the uncomfortable, unsparkling stories—that are front and center at this year's biennial, with Chicago, in all of our complexities and discomforts, acting as a lens through which they're told.

In 2017, Blair Kamin wrote in the *Chicago Tribune* that he hoped CAB could "displace, if only temporarily, the drumbeat of bad news about gang-related shootings." In 2019, instead of hiding from the city's traumas surrounding gun violence, New York-based MASS (Model of Architecture Serving Society) Design Group has constructed a memorial to victims of gun violence that includes personal items donated by family members. They have built four structures shaped as gabled-roof workers' cottages, with walls creating 700 unique shelves for victims' donated belongings and a plaque with their name. With

shelves surrounded in glass, the memorial becomes beautiful and fragile, akin to the process of healing.

While MASS has created a space for tenderness and remembrance, the biennial will also showcase the violence inherent in architecture. I'm particularly impassioned by the Settler Colonial City Project, led by architect-scholars Ana María León and Andrew Herscher. Their publications, programs, and interventions will "decolonize" the Chicago Cultural Center by revealing the "hidden stories of colonial violence embedded in the building"; for example, signage against the building's marble interiors reads, "This marble was quarried and assembled by exploited labor." The project's premise is a perfect example of evolved architecture programming: celebrating beautiful buildings is a skin-deep practice; a thorough airing of problematic histories of buildings and the people who made them is greatly needed.

Addressing gentrification and displacement as architectural issues is rare; even more rare is architecture addressing those issues through an emotional lens. An ongoing project titled Community Futures Lab, by interdisciplinary artists Camae Ayewa and Rasheedah Phillips, aka Black Quantum Futurism Collective, will collect stories from Chicagoans

"... AND OTHER SUCH STORIES"
Chicago Architecture Biennial
9/19-1/5/20
Chicago Cultural Center
78 E. Washington
chicagoarchitecturebiennial.org

Inherent violence

This year's Chicago Architecture Biennial may end the unstoppable homage to dead white men and narratives that neglect how architecture has victimized communities of color.

By **ANJULIE RAO**

Architecture biennials are created to take the pulse of the profession, to display what architects are making, thinking about, and valuing. If a pulse is what we were looking for, I would have put the Chicago Architecture Biennial in an ambulance years ago. Past editions were missing the critical, complicated histories of segregation and redlining; the grand, hopeful construction and spectacular destruction of large-scale public housing were glossed over; the seemingly unfixable disrepair that blight clearance brought was barely addressed. It's less complicated to focus on what's easier on the eyes: wealth, intellectual analyses, and sexy historic buildings make for a comfortable

and satiating architecture survey. Yet the new exhibition opening on September 19 might revive this corpse by presenting something different, exciting, and deeply uncomfortable: architecture as a form of power.

The first two CAB editions both focused on issues surrounding history with exhibitions at the Chicago Cultural Center. The first, in 2015, was titled "The State of the Art of Architecture" and addressed how the past affects the present; the great rifts between history and modernity. The 2017 exhibition, titled "Make New History," examined how the past affects the present; the great rifts, et cetera. In many ways being hammered by history felt like an unwavering, unstoppable homage to

about housing displacement and belonging. If the project is similar to the Futures Lab conducted in Philadelphia in 2017, visitors can look forward to learning more about capturing trauma and transforming community narratives. The project ties these stories together with concepts from Afrofuturism, manipulating time and consciousness to reimagine or map a better future.

Cultural Center visitors can also expect to encounter installations about a range of inherently political/architectural issues including ethical landlords, affordable housing scarcity, and access to clean drinking water, as well as several projects that address water and land use through indigenous practices and perspectives—voices lacking in prior biennials. All of this is in addition to more than 40 satellite installations across the city that discuss contested spaces, including closed schools and former public housing developments.

The only questionable project is *Cabbage Patch* by Danish artists Gamborg/Magnussen



Cabbage Patch at the Garfield Park Conservatory **BRIAN KINYON**

at the Garfield Park Conservatory, at which 10,000 cabbages have been planted in the rear grassy field designed originally by Danish-American landscape architect Jens Jensen. The installation also includes a functional kitchen and is intended to create “a gathering spot for local community groups, school programs, and visitors to Garfield Park.” Organized by the conservatory as a partner project,

low expectations abound: While the Danish invade a park designed originally by one of their own, how does the cabbage patch address East Garfield Park’s condition as a gentrifying Black neighborhood? Or its history as the site of the MLK riots of 1968? And why cabbages? Though it’s a cute idea, it’s another reminder of how easily architects can enter a community and erase that community’s history by

focusing on the white, European figure within their field.

On the other hand, at the last remaining of the Jane Addams Homes, in the Tri-Taylor neighborhood, Johannesburg-based Keleketla! Library will collect audio and video from visitors as they pass through the site, which will then be woven into an audio tapestry and broadcast into the Cultural Center. The group creates these sound tapestries as a way to tell stories about heritage and place that, as they say, “can exist parallel to each other in order to challenge dominant narratives.”

Challenging dominant narratives might be one way to make sense of the “pulse” of this year’s biennial; Umolu sees it rather as a process that “reveal[s] and share[s]” narratives that probe the histories and politics of our environment. This expansive view of architecture and cities resonates with a growing interest within the spheres of design and architecture, but goes beyond these fields to put forward a diversity of perspectives on issues that concern all of us.” As we seem to

endlessly grapple with an uncertain future of climate collapse as well as small and large-scale human displacement, this year’s biennial is shaping up to be a bold statement on the problematic nature of the built environment. “We hope to involve the full city and engage as many Chicagoans as possible in conversation about what it means to be a city and a community, while revealing connections on a global scale. We want visitors to walk away from the biennial with a new understanding of the role of architecture in our everyday lives,” Umolu explains.

Perhaps this is why I was so disappointed in the first two editions of the Chicago Architecture Biennial; the pulse of the field they articulated sat deep within the heart of the architecture profession, away from the challenges, fears, and futures of the people who live in and work within buildings. This new pulse sees architecture as a practice that expands to include issues of harm, connection, trauma, and access—all ideas and experiences that combine to create, subvert, take, or co-opt power. This new biennial might have a pulse that beats within us all.

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For years, the Chicago Housing Authority kept the Lathrop Homes mostly vacant and in disrepair while promising to restore the complex to 100 percent public housing. Now it's become a mixed-income community with 400 units of public housing—525 fewer than it used to have.

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'I suffered too much to live here'

Residents who survived the Lathrop Homes housing complex at its worst reflect on its regeneration.

By **MAYA DUKMASOVA**

J.L. Gross moved into the Lathrop Homes, a 925-unit Depression-era public housing complex on the north side, in 1988, two decades after coming back from the Vietnam war with a bullet permanently lodged in his back. He's lived in six different apartments in the development since then. For years Lathrop was neglected and many buildings stood empty as the Chicago Housing Authority, developers, residents, and the surrounding community negotiated redevelopment plans. Last year Lathrop had a grand

reopening as a mixed-income community with public housing, affordable, and market-rate units. Gross's latest move was to a renovated one-bedroom on Clybourn Avenue.

J.L. GROSS: I've been in Lathrop for the last 31 years. Originally I'm from the south side, 35th and Rhodes. I was a combat marine, a machine gunman in Vietnam. When I came back in '68 I was a little screwed up in the head. Veterans had preference, and that's how I ended up in public housing. It took me

about three years [to get an apartment]. I took Lathrop because it was a different side of town. I really wanted anonymity. They put me in a third-floor apartment over on Hoyne—2758. The third floor provided me an opportunity to overlook things in the courtyard or on the street. Black and Brown people, we don't get a chance to live by the river too often. So living on the Chicago River was a benefit. It had everything, ducks and geese, egrets, it was cool. That was part of the appeal.

In those days, Lathrop was the wild wild west. The gangs literally ruled Lathrop. They were shooting people in broad daylight. They were well ensconced, and people were intimidated by them. I lived in my community for 20 years before I became involved in it. A friend of mine was an organizer for Logan Square [Neighborhood Association], and through him I began identifying with my community, identifying with being an activist in my community.

CHA mismanagement and lack of police protection and the city not really picking up the garbage was really wearing on people. We were a community that didn't have an investment in it, and it pissed off a lot of people. There were [925] apartments over here.

Where I'm at now was called a row house [before the rehab]—you had an upstairs and a downstairs. There's a different apartment above me now. This is their idea of gentrification, to cut off the top floor and put somebody else up there. The apartments on the other side [of Diversey] were much larger than these. There were free-standing rooms: a kitchen, a living room, a bedroom. Whereas, as you can see, this is a kitchen and a living room combined.

Personally, I don't give a shit about this place. [The renovation] wasn't done for my community. My community was decimated because of a lack of interest from the city and even the federal government. What I wanted all along, what our community wanted all along, was a decent place to live and police protection. That's what every American community wants. And yet we weren't afforded that. For all the people who came to the CHA and said, *I got mold in my apartment, I got holes in this, I got holes in that, lack of water*—we got patchwork attention to what was going on, and [told] there was no money, [given] excuses as to why we should move. But some of us were tenacious enough to say: *Hey, whatever you build, you're gonna have to build me one, I ain't going nowhere*. Look at the area: I'm centrally located, I'm right on the river. There's no food desert over here, so why would I let somebody run me out of here? If I didn't succumb to the gangs I sure wasn't gonna succumb to City Hall or pressure from the CHA. Or the physical deterioration.

[The architectural preservation] was done only as a compromise. I was in those meetings. That's not what the developers wanted to do, that's something they *had* to do. The architecture has a historically significant value. I'm proud of the fact that we fought for the preservation of the architecture. It wasn't [Related Midwest, the developer]. It was the people who lived within Lathrop, former residents, civic groups, organizers, activists—those are the people who deserve the credit. And as far as them giving me a better place to live—I deserved that anyway. And not just me, everybody in this place deserved better.

I moved five times. First I was on Hoyne. We had a blizzard and my roof caved in, had to have an emergency move, I lost every-



"I don't see how I should be jumping up and down—my community was devastated," says J.L. Gross.

📍 JASON REBLANDO

For years Lathrop was neglected by the Chicago Housing Authority but was on the radar of private developers for its attractive location and historic character.

📍 JASON REBLANDO

The redevelopment of the Lathrop Homes into a mixed-income community was led by Related Midwest. Many of the old buildings were rehabbed, and unsubsidized rents for studios now start at \$1,200. 📍 JASON REBLANDO

thing. They moved me over on Diversey and then I had mold in my apartment. I went to the hospital one time and when I came home my house had been engulfed by mold, living, breathing mold in every room. I lost everything again. I moved over on Leavitt and lived there for three years. They closed it down, they were going to start to build over there. I waited out all those years that they talked about doing something and it never came to fruition. I moved to 2664 on Hoyne and I became the only tenant in the building, out of 12 apartments. The apartment above me flooded and I lost everything again. From there [they moved me] to 2750. So I've lost everything in three out of six apartments—telephone, television, shoes, clothes, everything. I've only been reimbursed once.

Lathrop had a reputation of being an isolated community because whites were intimidated. However Lathrop has always been an integrated community. It has Blacks, whites, Hispanics, Assyrians—we're a melting pot. We would have cookouts, we would have dances, we were a vibrant community, plus we had survived the gangs, so that just made us closer. Fast-forward to now: the developers came here saying they were gonna make it better for the people that lived in Lathrop. And for

us it's just the contrary. All the enhancements that you see now is for white people, not for the community that was here.

Black and Brown people, we do the train, we do the bus, but the majority of us, we don't do kayaks and canoes. It's for white people. [The creation of boating amenities] was supposed to be an appeal for us, and it really wasn't because them building a boathouse over here is taking an apartment from someone else. You're gonna tell me that you're gonna get rid of people to put a boathouse?

A lot of people want to return to Lathrop because they feel that it's better now, but this is something we should have had all along. I suffered too much to live here. I went through too much for me to then turn around and be a cheerleader for Related or whoever the developers are. I've earned my right to be here because of all I went through that came before this. You've got individuals and families that are good human beings, and everybody deserves a safe place to live. I lost 525 [public housing] apartments. I don't see how I should be jumping up and down—my community was devastated. Which has nothing to do with the buildings. And in three to five years this place will not look like my community. But I got a place to stay and I guess I should be happy

about that. If I say too much more they'll probably try to kick me out of here. But I can't help but be brutally blunt.

Cynthia Scott and Joseph Burrell moved to Lathrop in the 1980s. They met at the development and eventually combined households. They were the last tenants in an otherwise boarded-up building on the corner of Diversey and Hoyne and met with the *Reader* as they prepared to move to a rehabbed two-bedroom unit at 2980 N. Clybourn.

CINDY: I moved in in 1985, I was 23 or 24. My ex-husband was stalking me and it was an emergency move. Usually people are on the waiting list for a long time. I had one daughter, she was five, and I moved in at 2805 N. Leavitt. It was a one-bedroom. [The development] was beautiful, absolutely beautiful. There were benches where you could sit, they had a really nice playground. My neighbors were supernice. When I moved in they were having a back-to-school [event] and there were pony rides and all that. People were very friendly.

[My apartment] was on the second floor. The only thing I didn't like about it was the color paint they used, it was like a pee yellow,

like somebody had peed on the wall for days. But I was told that I could change it. I loved the kitchen. It was small, but I could look outside into the courtyard if the kids were playing. I had three more kids, another daughter and twins [in that apartment]. When I found out I was pregnant with the twins I went to management and they said they'd be moving me into a three-bedroom apartment—2700 N. Hoyne. I stayed there until the pipes broke down in the basement. I was stepping in boiling water.

JOSEPH: Most of the projects were all Black, and this was one of the most integrated ones. I came in 1983. I had separated from my wife and she had been on the list for low-income housing. We had decided that she would take my daughter and I'd take the two boys. She moved over here and then she decided she was going to move in with her girlfriend but wouldn't be able to take [our daughter]. She said, Why don't you come over here and take over the apartment and all four of you will have a place to stay? They just grandfathered me into the place. I had an apartment, it was called the penthouse, on the fourth floor of 2624 N. Hoyne, two bedrooms. You could get out on the roof; many times we would sit ➔



Cynthia Scott and Joseph Burrell both moved to Lathrop as single parents in the 1980s. Eventually they combined households and fought to preserve family public housing on the site. **© JASON REBLANDO**



Longtime Lathrop residents Joseph Burrell and Cynthia Scott pack up their public housing apartment in preparation for a move to one of the development's rehabbed units. **© JASON REBLANDO**

continued from 13
out and eat on the roof.

I thought it was very nice because I had seen other low-income housing, with family living in the Robert Taylor Homes, and because I was a Red Cross volunteer I had serviced people in other complexes that had been burned out. This was definitely the best of all the ones that I'd ever seen. There were flowers, there was grass everywhere. At night, people would sit outside on the benches. [The gangs] came later, that started happening in the late 90s, we started having a lot of trouble

between the Latin Kings and the Deuces over in the Hamlin Park area.

CINDY: When I first moved in I was working, and then I got pregnant with the twins and I couldn't. I had to get on assistance. At that time it was called public aid. I would have under-the-table jobs that would give me cash, which was a big help. But I never could get two steps ahead, always ended up two steps backwards. And when I would get ahead, they would take 30 percent of that [for rent]. Whatever I made they kept taking out.

And now I'm on disability and I really can't get ahead.

I had two girlfriends and we were called the Three Musketeers. We would sit outside during the day and watch our kids ride their bikes and play, and we'd sit outside and goof around and just talk, and people did that, they barbecued out in front of their house. And everybody was so friendly, so helpful. We became really close, like sisters. If our money was tight at the month, Brenda would cook some meat, I'd make a side dish, and [the third friend] would make a dessert.

JOSEPH: It's really nice, but I see it as being isolated. Because you don't get to meet other people outside of the neighborhood. I had met kids who had never been to the zoo, and I couldn't believe it—the zoo is like two miles from here. So when I would take my kids to the zoo I'd see if [the other kids] could go with us. You got a 227-square-mile city, you need to see more of the city and see what other people are doing. [In mixed-income housing] who knows? You might meet somebody who might know somebody who might get you a really good job. And you might become really good friends and do things together, things that you would never have done before.

CINDY: There's already been problems between the [public housing] residents and the market-rate people. We sit outside here. They don't want you to do that over there,

market-rate people are going to the office and complaining about us. We're still stigmatized, you know?

JOSEPH: There's a saying that's been going around for years: you can take a person out of the ghetto but you can't take the ghetto out of them. Some of it is resident-created problems. I've seen on Leavitt already where people have actually had chairs in the street, up against their cars, sitting in the chairs with the kids playing in the street. They've got this nice field to play in. They've got the nice river walk with benches, but they're not using that. I think because they're so used to being nosy and seeing who's coming and going [that] they feel isolated if they go somewhere where there's not a lot of activity. Where they would get away with throwing garbage on the ground, and graffiti, and loud talking and stuff over here, they're not getting away with it over there. They were warned that the same kind of activity was not gonna be put up with.

You got two different cultures, where you got people that have to actually go to work and they go to sleep at a certain time, and they don't have the luxury to sit up at night outside laughing and talking, or sit outside all day. That's the conflict. You gotta have some give and take, you have to have some compromise, and the only way I see that happening is if both sides were to get together and discuss how they're gonna work it out.

CINDY: The people who have been here for years and years are being mistreated. I mean, I've been here for years and I've never stopped doing volunteer work. But we get less priority. You've got money? You can pick out the apartment you want. Whatever they choose for us is what we have to take. There's no reason why I should have fought and fought and fought, doctor's note after doctor's note, to get my two-bedroom apartment. I think there's not gonna be any more CHA people living here [in ten years]. This is all gonna be market rate.

JOSEPH: It'll probably look like Lincoln Park. Actually, this is Lincoln Park, but on the neighborhood maps they only call this area Lathrop Homes. Maybe once it looks more like Lincoln Park it'll be grandfathered in. We still have a lot of seniors left over that probably will pass away. A lot of people died in the last few years, more moved away. When you see people moving in you only see the younger people, people in their 20s. And their children are dogs. **✎**

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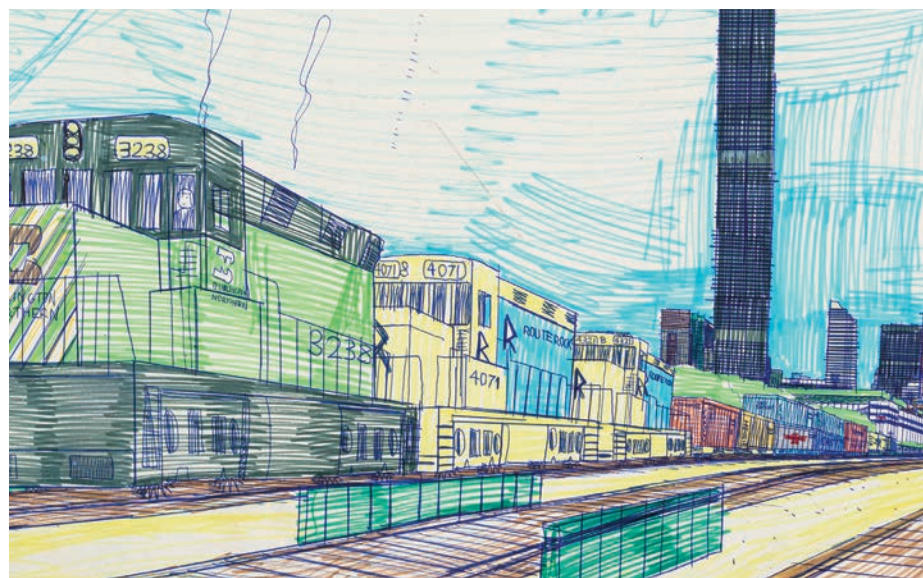
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Detail of the Dan Ryan Expressway, 1984
WESLEY WILLIS

The many dreams of Wesley Willis

Documenting the architectural creations of Chicago's ultimate outsider artist

By LEOR GALIL

Last summer, Intuit began exhibiting nearly a dozen Wesley Willis drawings as part of “Chicago Calling: Art Against the Flow” in conjunction with Art Design Chicago, an expansive, yearlong celebration of the city’s art history. Intuit’s show honored Willis and nine other local outsider artists (including Henry Darger, Lee Godie, and Mr. Imagination), and argued for their place in the historical canon. Willis, a six-foot-five schizophrenic Black man who drew detailed renderings of Chicago’s skyline and infrastructure, was the youngest figure included in the show—he was just 40 years old when he died in 2003—and he transcended the art world like none of the others.

In the 80s, Willis earned a reputation as a street artist. He sometimes worked on large pieces of poster board on the sidewalks and CTA platforms where he also sold his artwork. By the 90s, he turned his attention toward music, and his repetitive, diaristic Casio-keyboard ditties brought him unparalleled levels of fame; in 1995, he landed a deal with Rick Rubin’s major-label imprint American Recordings. Willis also independently released more than three dozen albums, and storied San Francisco punk label Alternative

Tentacles repackaged many of those songs on three *Greatest Hits* compilations. Willis never stopped drawing, either; he once told insanely comprehensive interviewer Nardwuar that he’d made 40,000 drawings.

Willis sold his pieces for as little as \$20, though he was happy to bargain. He exchanged at least one drawing with former Quenchers bar owner Earle Johnson for a turkey sandwich and a glass of orange juice. Since Willis died in 2003, the cost of his art

“WESLEY WILLIS: CITY OF MANY DREAMS”

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has skyrocketed; in July, Humboldt Park vintage shop An Orange Moon held a sale for eight Willis pieces, and half the drawings were priced at \$1,800. His art has found its way into the collections at Intuit, the MCA, and the Art Institute, but the majority of Willis’s drawings remain in the hands of collectors or those he sold to directly. Few have bought as many of those drawings as T. Paul Young, an architect who became a patron of and mentor to ➔



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Willis after a chance meeting in November 1981. Young archived several hundred pieces of Willis's over the years, and he supplied about 60 to the Matthew Rachman Gallery for "Wesley Willis: City of Many Dreams," which opened on September 13.

Young met Rachman this past winter, when a mutual friend suggested Young could help with a springtime exhibit dedicated to architect Mies van der Rohe. At age 17, Young got a job at Mies's Chicago firm, and his spiritual relationship to the modernist master runs deep. Young now serves as the executive director for the Bauhaus Chicago Foundation, which preserves the legacy and work of the New Bauhaus, a local offshoot of the influential German art school; Mies was the last director of the original architectural incubator. Needless to say, Young had material for Rachman. "That's when I discovered Wesley's connection to Paul, and all the works," Rachman says.

Young has showcased some of his Willis art before—he provided 30 drawings for a 2008 gallery show at suburban Dominican University. "For a long time, I've been working toward promoting Wesley's legacy in various ways," Young says. He even wrote a book, tentatively

titled *The Early Work of Wesley Willis*, though the project never advanced beyond the draft phase. Through the decades, Young built a substantial archive of Willis-related ephemera—sketches, unfinished drawings, and photos, in addition to the completed works.

Though he's sold some pieces from his collection, Young felt the timing was right to mount a proper exhibit of Willis's work.

"Paul and I spoke about it and agreed that Wesley deserved a show of all his work, and not just have this stuff be sold off," Rachman says. "We wanted to honor him and his relationship with Paul, and tell that story."

Young unspools some of his long history with Willis in an essay for the "City of Many Dreams" catalog. Art brought the two together. Young was teaching at the Illinois Institute of Technology when he noticed then 18-year-old Willis selling a large drawing of Daley Plaza in Chinatown. Young was taken by the young man's talent and invited Willis to sit in on his first-year architecture classes. Willis became ensconced at IIT without ever enrolling, spending roughly four years in the 80s sitting in on classes and hanging out in Mies's iconic S.R. Crown Hall building.

The body of work in "City of Many Dreams" focuses on Willis's material from the 80s, and demonstrates the artist's architectural foundation. Throughout his career, Willis rendered urban vistas in pen and marker on large slabs of poster board, and though he always had an eye for details, many of these pieces display his most painstakingly granular labor. In an aerial picture of Streeterville, Willis demarcated every building's story, and if you focus on his depiction of Lake Shore Drive, you can also make out impossibly teeny vehicles. In his essay, Young notes Willis's attention to architectural specificity—he'd draw mullions, the vertical structures that divide up windows, even if the buildings he drew didn't contain any in real life.

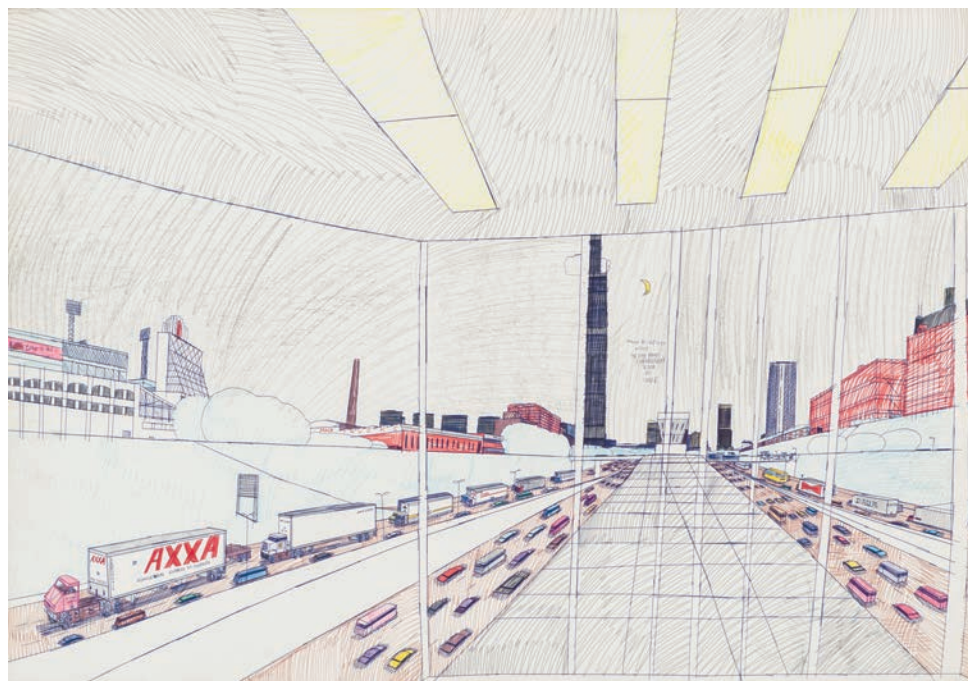
The show also crucially captures Willis's

process through the miscellaneous scraps Young held on to for decades. There are crayon portraits of Young's suburban house, small illustrations of buildings on photocopies of photographed cityscapes, and rigidly crafted commercial trucks drawn on canvases including ruled paper, a torn sheet, and what appears to be the back of a fragment of wrapping paper.

Young cataloged all his Willis works by dividing them into thematic categories, to each of which he assigned a number, one through ten. Drawings and sketches, for example, were the first category; and each item received its own number within the category. Young wrote Willis's initials and these two numbers on the back of each piece in pencil.

The show's crown jewel is the Daley Plaza illustration Young bought from Willis when they first met. It's the earliest known Willis drawing in existence. In the context of the other pieces in Young's collection, this piece underscores Willis's artistic growth. He was detailed but selective; he drew brand names on trucks, but did not depict the Daley Center's skeletal steel surface. Nearly every other building is also blank, but Willis drew vehicles in a few of them.

Willis's approach advanced as Young became his mentor and biggest champion. According to Young, Willis wanted to be an architect, which shouldn't come as a surprise considering the care he took illustrating Chicago's skyline. He loved buildings—in fact, Young says Willis wished Chicago had even more towers crowding downtown. "He thought Chicago should be more like New York," Young says. "He loved the thickness of the city." 



The Dan Ryan Expressway at 33rd Street, 1986
WESLEY WILLIS

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Chicago Vocational High School, 2100 E. 87th
 © COURTESY LEE BEY

South-side champion

Writer-photographer Lee Bey's new book *Southern Exposure* calls attention to architectural masterworks on the always overlooked south and west sides.

By LEE ANN NORMAN



Lee Bey has long been a champion for architecture on Chicago's south side. In 2017, the photographer, writer, consultant, and senior lecturer at the School of the Art Institute organized an exhibition of his photographs capturing south-side architecture for that year's Chicago Architecture Biennial. The exhibition, shown at the DuSable Museum,

became the inspiration for Bey's new book *Southern Exposure: The Overlooked Architecture of Chicago's South Side* (Northwestern University Press), out in October. It's the first publication to highlight several important but often ignored buildings by a range of well-known architects, including Frank Lloyd Wright and Eero Saarinen. The book's focus

on structures existing in neighborhoods many view as abandoned, blighted, and violent is an important step toward expanding the canon and encouraging Chicagoans to explore the city's rich architectural history farther afield than the Loop.

This interview has been lightly edited for length and clarity.

How did you become interested in architecture on the south side?

In some respects, it goes back to my childhood, growing up on the south side in the 1970s, [taking] car trips with my parents when I was a kid. My father liked architecture and would point out interesting buildings, or I'd spot one on my own and ask him questions about it. After awhile I began to notice and appreciate south-side buildings like the Museum of Science and Industry, the movie theaters that used to be along 63rd Street, the bungalows and brick two-flats. But as I

grew older, into my teens and 20s especially, I began to notice how vulnerable these beautiful places were. By the time the 1980s rolled around, decay and demolition had descended like a plague on that street. The difference was startling, and was playing out across the south side—in Englewood, Woodlawn, Roseland.

In Chicago, people tend to stay local, which means there are architectural gems that many people never see.

Where you're from is very important here. I'm 53, and I bet I've been asked fewer than 20 times in my adult life "What college did you go to?" But "What neighborhood are you from?" and "What high school did you go to?"—those are the important questions. That's a by-product of this long-Balkanized city, where every tribe has its spot and the marker separating "us" and "them"—economically, ethnically—is the width of a major street or railroad viaduct. And when you throw in race, it deepens just that much more.

And Black neighborhoods on the south and west sides are ignored the most by the city at large. The areas are treated as places to avoid because the crime narrative is so pervasive. For instance, I've lectured about architecture for years, and at the end of the talk someone white will ask, "What's that big building I see whenever I'm leaving town on the Chicago Skyway, near 87th?" [And I say] "Well, it's Chicago Vocational High School, probably the largest art-deco nonskyscraper building in the city, with decades of famous alumni like Bernie Mac, Dick Butkus, and more." And I think: *How can you not know this place? How can you pass this building and not at least be curious enough to double back later and see it?*

You have a book coming out focused on south-side buildings. Can you talk about one of your favorites?

This is hard because the book—*Southern Exposure: The Overlooked Architecture of Chicago's South Side*—has so many places that I really like. I mentioned Chicago Vocational, but I'm also a big fan of Pride Cleaners, a postwar dry cleaner that is still in operation at 79th and Saint Lawrence. It has this huge, futuristic, self-supporting concrete roof ➔



continued from 19

built at a radical angle—no other like it in Chicago. Last year, I gave a presentation at Modernism Week in Palm Springs and showed Pride Cleaners. Palm Springs is famously filled with similar buildings of this vintage, but when I showed Pride and that roof, you could hear and feel the reaction from the audience: wow. That's the kind of visual impact it has.

The vulnerability of buildings that you talked about earlier is really striking. There are many structures that are gone now, like ghosts haunting what are now vacant, overgrown lots on the street. How do you think

those “ghosts” inform the way we understand how we live in this city?

I think they do inform [our understanding], but not in the ways I wish. I want city leaders to say, “We fucked up Woodlawn by allowing it to be disinvested to the point of demolition. We played a hand in that neighborhood's economic and social downfall, and we won't let that happen again there or anyplace else in Chicago.” Instead it's more like: “Woodlawn is ripe for redevelopment now,” with no acknowledgment of the past.

You've alluded to this, but these issues are about notions of value. Modernist archi-

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Yale Apartments, 6565 South Yale Avenue. This seven-story Richardson Romanesque 1890s apartment building by architect John T. Long now provides affordable housing for senior citizens.

© COURTESY LEE BEY



Pride Cleaners, 558 E. 79th COURTESY LEE BEY



Welcome Inn Bed & Breakfast, 4563 S. Michigan COURTESY LEE BEY

itecture across Latin America, for example, seems to consider people might inhabit a space and use a building, which not only implies functionality, but also beauty. Do you sense that in our local architecture? The thing is, the beauty and functionality of buildings are evaluated differently if they are on the south and west sides. They are seen as unwanted, expendable, less valuable. My book shows a unique Frank Lloyd Wright house that sits on a ton of land and has a coach house that's the size of a bungalow. It's been for sale for \$175,000 for more than two years. Cheapest Wright house in America on a tree-lined street—and nobody wants it or

can finance it—because it's in West Pullman on the far south side. Fortunately, not all of the great south- and west-side architecture exists only in photographs or in memory. Do you see them having an effect on the look and feel of the city as new buildings go up? I would want them to have such an effect. That when we, as a city, discuss, honor and lift up this town's great architecture, we include the buildings in my book and the ones like them all around the south and west sides. I want these places—and the people who live in and around them—preserved and respected.



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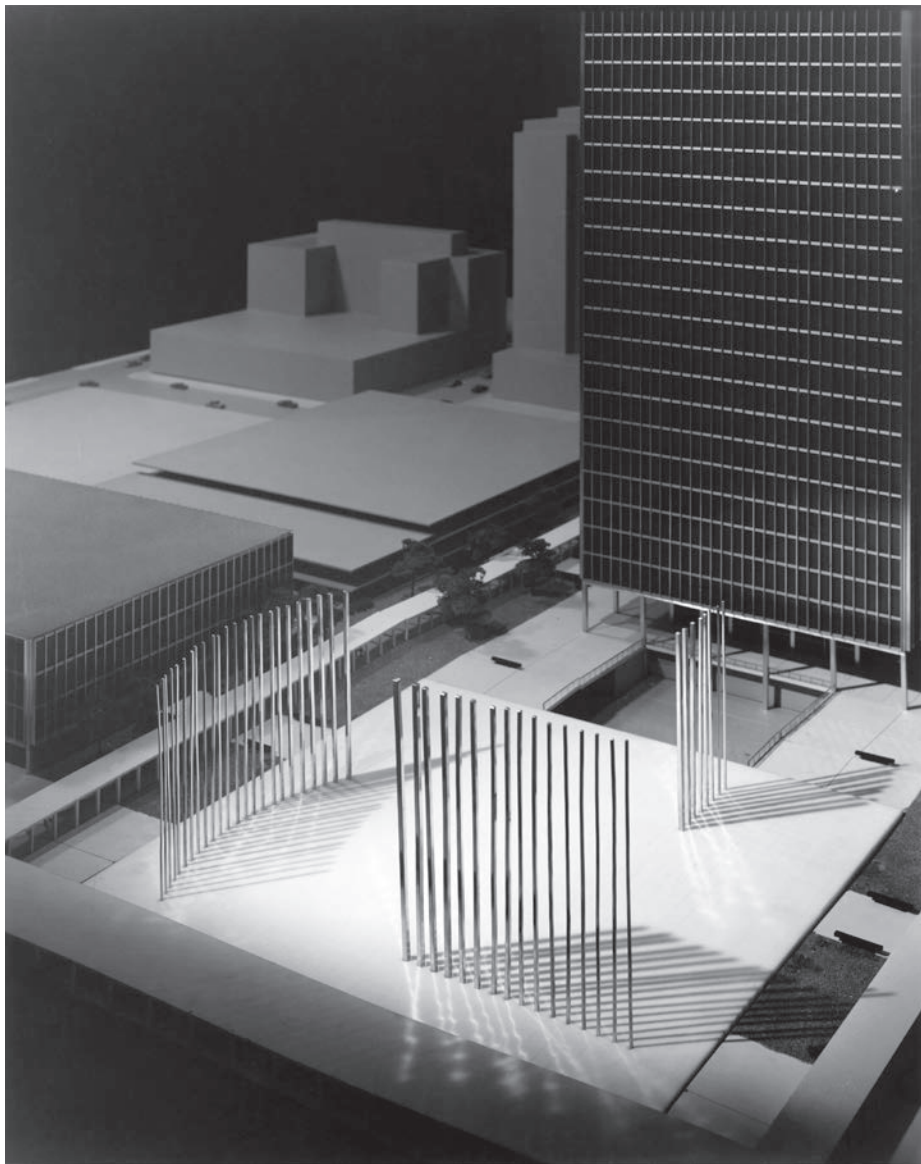
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Models for Skidmore, Owings & Merrill's entry in the Fermi competition, June 14, 1957  HB-20354-A; CHICAGO HISTORY MUSEUM; HEDRICH-BLESSING COLLECTION.

Big, unbuilt plans

A civic center in River North, a concrete ribbon that split Hyde Park north from Woodlawn, and a third World's Fair on the lakefront

By **MAX GRINNELL**

Before I came to Chicago, I knew about the Commercial Club's 1909 Plan of Chicago. I picked up a reprinted edition at the Seattle Public Library and pored over its luminous illustrations by Jules Guérin and magisterial prose by architects Daniel H. Burnham and Edward H. Bennett promising a greatly improved system of parks and highways, and a grand civic center where all governmental matters would be addressed efficiently and professionally.

Until that moment, my primary lens for understanding Chicago came through seeing *The Blues Brothers* many, many times with

my family. Needless to say, they were vastly different versions of the same place. And *The Blues Brothers* had Ray Charles, Aretha Franklin, James Brown, John Lee Hooker, and Cab Calloway.

The 1909 Plan of Chicago is silent when it comes to music.

When I arrived in the city 25 years ago to start college, I soon learned about other elaborate plans that were never completed. They fascinated me as I continued to explore and wonder "What if?" Three of these plans that most fascinate me include a grand vision for a civic center in River North, a concrete ribbon

to divide Hyde Park from Woodlawn, and a third World's Fair to be held on the lakefront.

Today a casual stroll through River North reveals a thicket of pricey steak houses, boutique hotels, and an endless parade of fast-casual eateries. Seven decades ago, the area was better known as the Near North neighborhood and it was commonly known for an endless parade of adult entertainments, clip joints, single residency occupancy hotels, and bars set up to fleece visiting conventioners.

Into this steamy mess of humanity contained within old warehouses and decrepit three- and four-story buildings stepped Arthur Rubloff, Chicago's most well-known (if not always well-loved) real estate developer. Working with his team, Rubloff developed an 151-acre Fort Dearborn project that included moving the existing civic center complex from the Loop onto the north bank of the Chicago River, along with offering large parcels for new apartment buildings, improved light industrial structures, and a heliport at Wolf Point. The goal of the project was twofold: replace the aging government buildings in the Loop, and revitalize the Near North area by creating modern buildings for retail and other uses.

When the plan was first put forth in 1954, there was a formal announcement and project display hosted at Navy Pier. While Mayor Martin Kennelly expressed enthusiasm for the Fort Dearborn plan, his successor, Mayor Richard J. Daley, offered just boilerplate platitudes. The plan was officially abandoned several years later. Rubloff would go on to work on numerous other projects, most notably the creation of Carl Sandburg Village.

Seven miles south, Hyde Park was facing its own challenges in the early 1950s. The University of Chicago was increasingly concerned about the long-term viability of its campus amid a community that was rapidly changing to include more low-income residents, notably Appalachian whites and African Americans from the south.

Woodlawn was experiencing an even more dramatic racial transition as the community was quickly becoming majority African American. Against this backdrop, the University of Chicago's preliminary 1955 master plan was issued amid fervent concern among community groups, local activists, and others.

Prepared by the Finnish architect Eero Saarinen, the plan offered a response to increasing "blight" and "neighborhood deterior-

ation" identified by University of Chicago researchers and those working on the long-term plans for Hyde Park's urban renewal program. It is not surprising that it includes recommendations to create cul-de-sacs for 59th and 60th Streets, effectively curbing traffic into and from Stony Island Avenue.

Along with these not-so-surprising mid-20th-century fixes for urban woes, one also finds a plan for an expressway that would travel down 61st Street from the lakefront. The stated goal was that this concrete ribbon would eventually connect with the federally sponsored freeway that would run a mile west of campus. In Saarinen's formal plan, the expressway was described as "a way to effectively reunite the south campus to the area north of the Midway." Offering a bit more honest commentary, a U. of C. administrator commented at a board of trustees meeting that "the area south of 61st Street has gone beyond any hope of rehabilitation and we should seek other options."

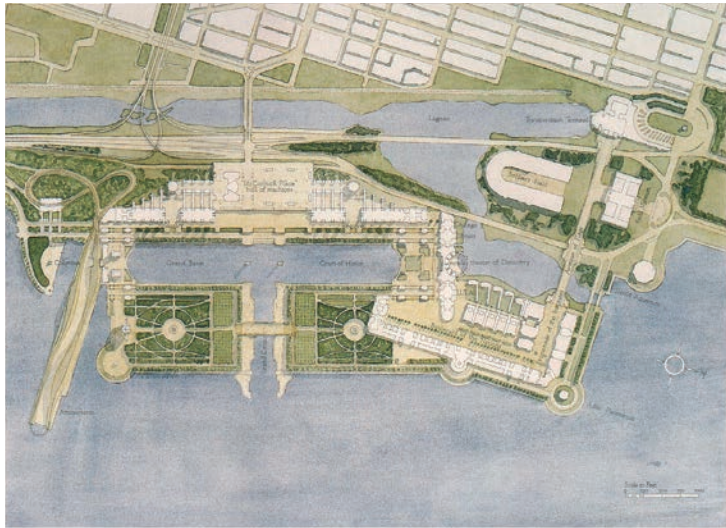
While the expressway along 61st Street and those cul-de-sacs did not come to pass, one only needs to think about the ongoing conversations about the Obama Presidential Center to be reminded that these debates about these big plans are very much with us today.

Once upon a time, cities included the world's fair among their biggest plans and possible accomplishments. Not only would visitors come and spend money in hotels and restaurants, but they would also get to see the latest in scientific, technological, and cultural innovations in one place. Now we have our devices.

But after Chicago's two successful world's fairs, it stood to reason that a group of businesspeople might begin to wonder "What about a third?" The spark for this channeling of energy came from the mind of architect Harry Weese, who offered up a speculative drawing in 1977 that envisioned a Ferris wheel and a reimagined festival marketplace for what, at the time, was a rather forlorn Navy Pier.

While only intended as a bit of prospective speculation, the presentation served as the spark to create a World's Fair committee three years later. From 1980 to 1985, the Chicago's World Fair Corporation lobbied for an extensive development along Burnham Harbor that would have included a new International Center for the Arts and a high-speed "skytrain."

Weese's vision was not the only one offered up during these years. Architect Bertrand Goldberg crafted a series of elaborate drawings in the spring of 1984 that included a floating fair complex south of Navy Pier, along with two elaborate turning basins along the south branch of the Chicago River near Chinatown.



Stuart Cohen and
Anders Nereim,
"Project for the
1992 Chicago
World's Fair" (1984)
OZ: VOL. 6

In a *Chicago Tribune* article from December 14, 1984, Goldberg also expressed serious reservations about the ability of the city's transportation network to move the expected 55 million visitors to and from the proposed fairground site. Ultimately, the effort fizzled out in 1985 and the world's fair was formally awarded to Seville, Spain.

What is perhaps most striking about this troika of exuberant plans is that they were

all coordinated under the auspices of private actors and institutions. Much like the Plan of 1909, these ambitious efforts did not come from the city's planning department or any other regional planning body. They were all privately led initiatives that forced local politicians, community groups, and others to respond along the way. [A](#)

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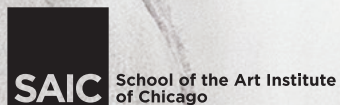
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The Highway is Like a Lion's Mouth (animation still), 2018, video and sound installation, 10 min, 53 sec. © COURTESY SAMSON YOUNG

Hong Kong artist Samson Young and the Century of Progress

His first solo U.S. museum show explores optimism characterized by the World's Fair.

By IRENE HSIAO

“Little one, I have dreams to sell,” begins one of a parcel of two-part choral songs by Alfred H. Hyatt and E. Markham Lee “especially suited for ladies’ schools, the higher classes in girls’ schools, and well-trained boys’ voices,” purveyed at six for a shilling. “There is tender and genuine feeling in these pieces, and they are calculated to raise the musical taste of all who sing them,” reads the advertisement in the *Musical Herald* on July 1, 1904. In “The Dream Seller,” a figure entices the listener with the promise of things that sparkle in the night, weaving together notions of self-improvement, consumerism, and a life of ease in the sky. Its refrain, “Silver moon or golden star, which will you buy of me?,” forms the title of contemporary Hong Kong artist Samson Young’s first American solo museum exhibition, at the Smart Museum in Chicago, which considers the danger, wonder, and optimism of the utopian drive as characterized by the 1933 Chicago World’s Fair and experienced in the present day.

A Century of Progress, the city’s second

World’s Fair, convened nations on the lakefront and Northerly Island to celebrate the theme of technological innovation under the motto “Science Finds, Industry Applies, Man Conforms.” Featuring the latest in automobiles and futuristic architecture, the fair was conceived in part as a vindication of capitalism during the depths of the Great Depression and described afterward as a “utopia . . . founded on democracy and manufacturing.” The century was Chicago’s: the event marked the centennial of the city, and the fair endowed the city’s flag with its fourth star. When the fair opened, 12 million Americans, a quarter of the labor force, were unemployed.

The House of Tomorrow, a 12-sided glass-clad edifice designed by George Fred Keck, was the most popular of the 12 futuristic domiciles featured at the fair. Replete with a hangar for a tomorrow when every household had a jet, the house was a mesmerizing failure from the start, with a passive solar heating system that rendered the structure an oven in summer. Currently situated with four other surviving “Homes of Tomorrow” in Indiana Dunes National Park, it stands vacant and dilapidated, awaiting a private tenant willing to assume responsibility for an estimated \$2 million restoration.

Young’s film *Houses of Tomorrow*, premiering at the Smart alongside other films, sculptures, drawings, and archival materials, opens with a drone’s-eye view of the dark dodecagon, transformed into a manic Ferris wheel from our sky-high vantage, accompanied by the peppy electronic jingle of a slot machine or video game. Inside, a man (Michael Schiefel) stands in gloves and coattails with brilliantined hair, an iPad, and a microphone, crooning in a ruined kitchen with nothing but Miracle Whip, the cheaper, beefed-up mayonnaise of 1933, in the cupboards. The jars are labeled for international sale, English and Chinese. “It’s so strange, and it’s so divine,”

the man sings, before an elliptical series of images flashes forth—automobiles, amphorae, animated figures doing calisthenics and grand jetes. A banner the color of a Chinese flag reads “If we / burn / you / burn / with us”—the *Hunger Games* tagline spray-painted on the walls of Hong Kong by protesters demanding democracy.

Labor Day is the American holiday commemorating the Pullman strike of 1894, which ended with deadly intervention by federal troops and competed with the first Chicago World’s Fair to make our city an international focal point for discovery and democracy. Generally marked by a day off from work and a barrage of exhortations to buy clothes, cars, and electronics at cut-rate prices, this Labor Day, students in Young’s home Hong Kong began a strike following 13 weeks of prodemocracy demonstrations.

Hong Kong has been a port, a colony, a special administrative region—it is an island and a peninsula, independent and bound, with boundaries named by roads rather than topological features and an indeterminate, constantly shifting area of reclaimed land. It hems in the harbor, though it rests in the ocean; it does not know its borders, even as it is the China that speaks.

Young is also hybrid—a musician, composer, performer, visual artist educated in music, philosophy, and gender studies in Hong Kong, Australia, and the United States whose works take the form of drawings, sculptures, music compositions, performances, and films. He has represented Hong Kong at the Venice Biennale and assembled audiences to walk on the streets where the 2014 Umbrella movement occurred in an immersive performance that ended with Young singing personally to each participant over their mobile phones. “I think it is important to have an aspiration for a better future,” he says. ■

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The Ship of Tolerance docks at Navy Pier

With a mast composed of paintings created by children all over the world, this ship is a vessel for a more peaceful future.

By ANDREA MICHELSON

During a recent orientation on the Ship of Tolerance at MacArthur Middle School in Prospect Heights, Russian artist Emilia Kabakov posed two questions to the students: What problems did they expect to see in the future, and what could they do to solve them?

“They’re very concerned about the future, more than we understand,” Kabakov says. “But the main thing they all say is, ‘We have to unite. Only by being together, we can save the world and have a better future.’”

This message of unity is a core tenet of the Ship of Tolerance, a multisite conceptual art project launched by the Ilya and Emilia Kabakov Foundation in the mid-aughts. The ship has been installed in 16 cities around the globe since its start in Libya in 2005. Now Chicago is the next stop on the journey toward tolerance.

Presented as part of Expo Chicago, the Ship of Tolerance docked at Navy Pier on Tuesday, September 17, and will remain on display through Sunday, October 6. Construction of the 50-foot-tall vessel began in early September, but programming has been in the works for two years, says Chicago project manager Nadia Taiga.

Taiga, a Chicago transplant who hails from Russia, says she thinks Chicago is an ideal location for the ship because it’s a “community-oriented” city. “You can make things happen here,” Taiga says. “If the idea is great and somehow benefits the city and other local organizations, then people will be very supportive.”

She says there are more than 50 partners and sponsors involved in the project, including the Chicago Public Library, Chicago



The Ship of Tolerance sails on Lake Zug in central Switzerland.
 © DANIEL HEGGLIN

Children's Museum, Bronzeville Children's Museum, Hyde Park Art Center, and Lumiere Children's Therapy. Local schools like MacArthur also participated as educational partners tasked with leading tolerance workshops for children ages six to 15.

Although Kabakov provides an introduction to the workshops—with the help of her granddaughter and “ambassador of tolerance,” Orliana Morag—she prefers that local educators take the lead in determining which issues are most important to their communities.

“It could be bullying, or gun violence. Every city has a different situation,” Kabakov says. “We’re trying to adjust the Ship of Tolerance to local problems, and that’s why we prefer teachers who know this, and know the children, and know how to work with them.”

The workshops not only addressed themes of peace and unity through discussion, but also through collaborative artwork. In a true test of tolerance, the children worked in small

The spirit of tolerance and international collaboration will also be reflected in concerts taking place at Navy Pier and the Chicago Cultural Center this weekend. Ever since the ship’s installation in Havana, Cuba, in 2012, Kabakov’s daughter Viola Kanevsky has organized concerts that unite children from different countries through music.

“We started to put these concepts together so my kids could see how their music allowed them to communicate with kids from completely different socioeconomic backgrounds, from different countries and languages,” Kanevsky says. “They could not speak to them at all, but they could all sit down and put together a chamber concert.”

At the concerts, local musicians and dancers will perform on the same stage as artists from Canada, Russia, Ukraine, Afghanistan, Germany, and Canada. After sharing their specialties, the groups will unite for a collaborative number that they put together in just a few days.

Kanevsky says many of the musicians performing in Chicago, including her own son and daughter, have played at other Ship of Tolerance sites in the past. The group keeps in touch between projects, she says, and they continue to act as ambassadors of tolerance long after the music stops.

What’s more, she has noticed an effect on the children’s parents as well. She says while they may not be as open-minded as the kids, they find common ground when they realize that they all want the best for their children.

“We can then put aside all of our differences and realize that the person who’s sitting across from me, who doesn’t speak my language, who doesn’t look like me, is really exactly the same underneath,” Kanevsky says. “And I feel in the world the way it is now, it’s the only way to go forward and fix what’s wrong.”

THE SHIP OF TOLERANCE
 On display 9/17-10/6 at City Stage in Polk Bros Park, Navy Pier, 600 E. Grand.
shipoftolerance.org

groups to create silk paintings that would later be stitched together to make up the ship’s sail.

Kabakov estimates that the children who participated in Chicago tolerance workshops have made more than 500 paintings over the past year. For the first time in Ship of Tolerance history, Kabakov is also using paintings from other cities that have participated in the project to create a multinational sail. Paintings from London, Moscow, Havana, and more will be displayed alongside the Chicago artwork, and Kabakov brought some paintings from Chicago with her on a recent trip to Europe.

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THEATER



La Tía Mariela PAULINA WATTY

PREVIEW

Producing locally, thinking globally

Destinos, the Chicago International Latino Theater Festival, brings Latinx artists to Chicago—and vice versa.

By **MARISSA DE LA CERDA**

If there's ever an opportunity to see the full range of Chicago Latinx theater, Destinos, the Chicago International Latino Theater Festival, is it. The six-week festival, produced by the Chicago Latino Theater Alliance (CLATA), returns for its third year and features Latinx artists and theater companies from all over the city. It also features Latinx companies and performers from Los Angeles, New York, New Orleans, Chile, Mexico, and Puerto Rico.

"The goal here is to take Chicago's Latinx theater companies and bring them to the same level as the internationally and nationally acclaimed companies," says Jay Kelly, publicist

for Destinos. "We have great companies here that deserve to be represented wholly and seen by many."

The festival includes five plays that represent the scope of the Chicago Latinx theater experience, including *The Delicate Tears of the Waning Moon* by Rebecca Alemán, presented by Water People Theater, which tells the story of Paulina, a human rights journalist who wakes up from a coma and must recover her memory so she can achieve justice. There is also *Hope: Part II of a Mexican Trilogy*, presented by Teatro Vista, which follows the Mexican American Morales family through the sexual revolution and the explosion of rock 'n'



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roll in the 1960s. Though this is part two of a three-part series, neither parts one nor three are needed for this story to be understood by audience members.

Destinos will also feature the final version of UrbanTheater Company's *Back in the Day: An '80s House Music Dancesical*. The play, initially a work in progress, ran in previews over the summer, and the creative team incorporated feedback from those performances in preparation for the October 10 opening. Other Chicago plays being shown are Aguijón Theater's *Exquisita Agonía* by Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright Nilo Cruz, which follows an opera singer who loses her husband in a car accident and then pursues the person who received his transplanted heart, and Repertorio Latino Theater Company's *Hotel-Ó*, which seeks to bring attention to gendered violence in Latinx communities.

Aside from presenting these five plays in Chicago, Destinos will be taking Water People Theater's *La Peor De Todas* to the Universidad del Claustro de Sor Juana in Mexico City as part of their goal to give local plays more exposure.

"We wanted our local plays to get the same opportunities and have programmers from other countries take a look at them," says CLATA cofounder and executive director Myrna Salazar, who notes that the festival will be hosting ten national and international festival programmers.

The national artists featured this year are all solo acts. From New York, there's *Organic Sofrito or Other Recipes for Disaster*, a dark comedy written and performed by Venessa M. Diaz that incorporates spoken-word poetry to explore a dysfunctional family and the healing power of traditional Latinx dishes. From New Orleans comes *Aliens, Immigrants & Other Evildoers*, a sci-fi show by José Torres-Tama that challenges the anti-immigrant narrative that's been dominating the media. *Daughter of a Cuban Revolutionary* is a one-woman tale from Los Angeles of Marissa Chibas's family and its role in the 1950s Cuban Revolution.

Mexican playwright and actor Conchi León returns to the festival with *La Tía Mariela*, a look into how Mexico turns death into a celebration of life through song and dance that also features Regina Orozco and Montserrat Marañón. *Andares*, copresented with Chicago Shakespeare and created by director Héctor Flores Komatsu, shines a light on the struggles Indigenous people face trying to balance modernity and tradition. Puerto Rico's *Soltera, Casada, Viuda y Divorciada* is a comedy by Román Sarmentero told through four points of view about women's relationships with men. Finally, Chilean director and puppet artist Aline Kuppenheim's *Feos*, based on a short story by Uruguayan novelist Mario Benedetti, is a bunraku puppet show mixed with stop-motion projections that challenges how we view and accept our flaws.

With the local, national, and international acts, Kelly and Salazar believe Destinos represents the depth of the Chicago Latinx theater experience, especially since the plays are being hosted everywhere from marquee venues like Goodman Theatre and Steppenwolf to cultural institutions like the National Museum of Mexican Art in Pilsen and storefront theaters in predominantly Latinx neighborhoods like Aguijón Theatre in Belmont Cragin and Repertorio Latino Theatre Company in Bridgeport.

Above all, Salazar hopes that the stories being told throughout the festival make the Latinx community feel represented while resonating with those outside the community too. "I would love to share these stories with non-Latinos so there is more understanding of who we are," she says. "And for them to see that our stories are not all that different from theirs." 

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REVIEW

The Great Leap scores a three-pointer

Lauren Yee's play brings together basketball and the Tiananmen Square uprising of 1989.

By **CATEY SULLIVAN**

In June, the *Washington Post* published an article about the June 4, 1989, slaughter in China's Tiananmen Square, when armed tanks and the Chinese army opened fire on tens of thousands of pro-

testers peacefully demanding the country's repressive, authoritarian regime move toward a democracy. The death count ranges from hundreds to thousands—China has made statistics unavailable and scrubbed the country's Internet of any mention of the uprising. As the *Post* noted, many Chinese born after 2000 don't even know the brutally repressed revolution happened. With *The Great Leap*, American playwright Lauren Yee puts audiences in the center of that sweltering June movement and the erasure that followed. As the script points out, China was "already learning to forget" by June 5.

Directed by Jesca Prudencio, *The Great Leap* is based on real events, specifically the 1989 "friendship game" in Beijing between a Chinese team and a San Francisco team of Chinese American players. As she so masterfully did with *Cambodian Rock Band*, Yee filters the story of nightmarishly repressive government through the eyes of immensely sympathetic characters. Here, we're on the heels of 17-year-old San Fran B-ball phenom Manford Lum



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(Glenn Obrero). When Manford becomes lost in Tiananmen Square, the consequences ripple into stormy international waters even as Manford's personal story comes into sharp focus.

The action begins in 1971, when Chinese Communist Party operative Wen Chang (James Seol) becomes coach of the Chinese team. He's mentored (sort of) by U.S. coach Saul (Keith Kupferer, delivering everyman profanities better than anyone you're ever apt to see onstage). When the two meet again in 1989, the Tiananmen uprising engulfs them both. Yee makes the culture clash both wrenching and—often—incongruously funny. The juxtaposition of humor with tragedy is scalpel sharp, especially when Wen Chang is charged with translating the mishmash of grammar-free profanities Saul favors. The laughter throughout makes the production's final image—and its implications for the characters on stage—all the more wrenching.

Prudencio's ensemble is winning, no matter the scoreboard count on scenic designer Justin Humphres's basketball-court set. Obrero is all sinewy muscle and relentless, youthful brash-

ness—until he's faced with the one person able to shatter his facade of hyperactive self-confidence. Seol makes Wen Chang's journey vivid: In 1971, he's stooped, deferential, and shocked by Saul's brand of U.S. aggression. In 1989, he's upright, canny, and confident, a savvy politico in a country where one misstep or wrong word can get you imprisoned.

Rasean Davonte Johnson's projection design captures the massive Tiananmen protests with terrible, hard-hitting beauty. Pornchanok Kanchanabanca's original music sonically heightens the stakes with subtlety throughout. Keith Parham's zippy lighting design captures the speed and intricacy of real-life basketball.

The drama's final moments put a personal spin on a globally iconic image of bravery. The man in the image is lost—no one knows for certain who he was or what became of him. Still, hope has a way of floating. It's treading water in *The Great Leap*, to the beat of basketballs bouncing like heart palpitations. 

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THEATER

REVIEW

All about my mother

In *Dana H.*, Lucas Hnath explores his mother's trauma and survival in her own words.

By **KERRY REID**

In the playwright's notes to *Hillary and Clinton*, which premiered at Victory Gardens in 2016 before its Broadway run last spring, Lucas Hnath implored future producers, "Do not play for easy recognition. Don't imitate. Don't even try to cast actors who look like these people."

That's probably sound advice to avoid on-stage caricatures of famous people. But when

the character onstage is your own mother and the words are her own story, how do you honor that?

In the case of Hnath's searing *Dana H.*, now onstage at the Goodman's Owen Theatre (following a run with Center Theatre Group in Los Angeles), the solution is to have Deirdre O'Connell lip-synch her way through his mother's account of the five months in 1998 when she was kidnapped by a former mental patient (and, crucially, an ex-con member of the Aryan Brotherhood) and moved around a series of sleazy motels, mostly in Florida. Dana Higginbotham was a nondenominational chaplain who met "Jim" in a psych ward after the latter attempted suicide. She let him stay in her house over Christmas and helped him find an efficiency apartment. After another suicide attempt (captured in photos that O'Connell's Dana pulls from her purse), a manic Jim broke into her house, knocked her out cold, and took her hostage.

The lip-synching device—though calling it that makes it sound clinical, when it's any-



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Deirdre O'Connell in *Dana H.*

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thing but—serves not to distance us from Dana's story, but to surround us with her voice. The interviews with Dana were recorded by Steve Cosson of the New York-based theater company the Civilians, which specializes in "investigative theater," and adapted by Hnath. Mikhail Fiksel's sound design gives both volume and subtlety to Dana as she makes her way through a story that, even more than 20 years later, often feels unbelievable to her. And as we hear it, it becomes enragingly unfathomable to us.

O'Connell's performance under Les Waters's direction embodies both the doubt and the resilience in Dana as she fiddles with her glasses, twists a water bottle in her hands, and occasionally refers to her own written version of events, apologizing for the fuzziness of the time line she's recounting. It's not uncommon for victims of trauma to disconnect physically and feel as if their story is happening to someone else. Centering Dana's actual voice while using another woman's physical presence is a way for Hnath to both honor his mother's experience in her own words (crucial when women's accounts of violence and abuse are routinely discounted) and embody that disconnect.

The uncertainty of the time line matters less than what emerges over and over in Dana's narrative: the cops, to put it bluntly, were useless, if not complicit. Time and again, police pull Jim (who has resumed his criminal activities) aside, even as a badly bruised and silent Dana stands by him, only to let him go on his way with a pat on the shoulder and a laugh. Sickeningly, it becomes apparent that his vis-

ible Brotherhood prison tats aren't a warning sign, or at least not the way we might think.

In Dana's telling, the cops are afraid of the Brotherhood—and from what she recounts of a documentary she saw about them, maybe with good reason. Eventually, Dana begins wondering if Jim isn't actually an informant for law enforcement, which means whatever hell she's going through is just collateral damage to them.

Dana witnesses Jim's criminal activity, but this isn't a story of Stockholm syndrome, a la Patty Hearst. Nor does the narrative dwell on many details of the violence Dana directly experiences, except in one very specific gut-wrenching instance. A survivor of childhood abuse, at one point Dana ponders if that somehow made it easier for her to survive Jim (who was himself raised in the Brotherhood from an early age) than it would be for some "Barbie" who'd never been hit before. "You adapt to maladaptation," she observes, with heartbreaking understatement, while also wondering if "Jim was the incarnation of my spiritual condition."

There is hope in this story too, but that comes from Dana's own ability to listen to others; her specialty as a chaplain is in hospice care, helping those close to death find peace. "A person who can be an empathetic witness can bring healing," she observes. By trusting the audience to listen to his mother's story, Hnath asks us to find empathy for those trapped in cycles of abuse, and believe their voices. **R**

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On Notice
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that were established by large corporate media to control an idea—specifically of what a woman looks like or what they should be—the younger generation is actively using those mechanisms.” *On Notice* questions whether it’s possible to take control of the mechanisms without falling prey to replicating “the same negative images,” says Kranicke.

Sundry’s environment takes center stage with green-screen runways upon which “fabricated personas” are projected. “My pushback as an architect is that, at some level, green screens are making architecture recede,” maintains Sundry, adding, “All the infrastructure of the Internet is huge and massive and expensive, but we’re not supposed to notice or look at it.”

The dialogue between past and present is also physically manifested by the Site/less space itself. Prior to opening Site/less, Zephyr performed at the Defibrillator Gallery. “It was always a little bit disheartening or bittersweet to see the architectural installations that we constructed at Defibrillator come down two weeks later,” says Kranicke.

By contrast, at Site/less, echoes of previous shows remain. Says Sundry, “The set from before can never entirely leave. For instance, if you do come here, the 1,500 bricks [from the environment for 2018’s *Shadows Across Our Eyes*] will always be here. They’re already on their fourth reconfiguration. It’s kinda like when you excavate, you find remnants of Troy or Carthage.”

Running parallel with *On Notice* is *Critical Groupings*, an installation created by Sundry out of concrete parking stops and based on the “feasible utopias” of Hungarian-born French architect and urban planner Yona Friedman, which will then be used by five different artists to initiate “performative explorations” into concepts of trust and openness. The initial five will then nominate other artists, who will remain unknown to Kranicke and Sundry, to use the space.

“We look at it as an exercise in institutional openness,” says Kranicke. “Part of the mission of Site/less is to push against traditional models of curation. Large and small organizations all work within a specific curatorial parameter, and we wanted to look at those parameters and propose different ideas and push back against the traditional way.”

@kerryreid

DANCE PREVIEW

Dancing about architecture

Site/less and Zephyr Dance explore the connection between movement and architecture.

BY KERRY REID

Michelle Kranicke, director of Zephyr Dance, and architect David Sundry have been creative collaborators for years in addition to being married. But their partnership took a significant step forward last year with the establishment of their West Town space Site/less. As part of the 2019 Chicago Architecture Biennial, they’re premiering their latest, *On Notice*, at Site/less in October.

Dance and architecture are both, as Kranicke notes, “charged with organizing bodies and space.” While past collaborations have been more about Sundry creating spaces in response to Kranicke’s choreography, she says that with this newest work, “the tables are flipped a little bit and I am actually reacting much more to the architecture rather than him reacting to the choreography.”

The piece, created in collaboration with dancer-choreographer Molly Fe Strom, both throws back to the past—Kranicke cites groundbreaking postmodern feminist photographers Cindy Sherman and Laurie Simmons as inspirations—and considers our present age of self-branding and social media.

In particular, Kranicke wants to explore how “because of selfies, because of the Internet, because of the phone being able to allow you to create a brand, these top-down mechanisms

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OPENING

RR Academic exercised
Blue Stockings can make you see red
about gender discrimination.

Jessica Swale's 1896-set drama should come with a trigger warning. I mean, perhaps I'm projecting, but when an esteemed scholar ("he dines with Darwin, for crissakes!") starts lecturing on why women are physiologically unfit for education (the brain leaches blood from the reproductive organs) and pronounces educated women a threat to the very foundation of all humanity, I high-key wanted to vault over the front row and punch him in his fucking foundation, even though he was in 19th-century Cambridge University, bedrock of Western education and hardly an outlier in the sciences. It took 800 years for Cambridge to admit women, almost 850 to award them diplomas. Swale's play is concerned with a movement to let women graduate from Cambridge's sister school for girls, Girton College. It's a tough sell for the women at the hub of director Spenser Davis's incendiary never-mind-reading-this-get-a-ticket-now-caliber Promethean production.

Science is not on women's side. Also, Cambridge's female students (standout performances by Julia Rowley, Imani Lyvette, Elise Marie Davis, and Heather Kae Smith) and faculty (Cameron Feagin, Jamie Bragg, also marvelous) don't get a vote in whether women deserve diplomas for doing (at least) the same work as male students. (Cambridge) womens' worth will be decided by (Cambridge) men. Who may also be those guys wielding torches and/or burning effigies of women in the streets.

"But just you wait, 'enri 'iggins!," to reference another patriarchal nightmare. It gets even more likely to trigger when the most brilliant young student (Lyvette in a heartbreaking performance) is forced to become a sacrificial lamb for what turns out to be a lost cause. Costumer Rachel Sypniewski's elaborate frocks are period perfect, and Davis's seamless cast convincingly depicts elite British academia, but there's something all too familiar about what's happening to the marvelous ensemble wearing them. —**CATEY SULLIVAN** *BLUE STOCKINGS* Through 10/13: Thu-Sat 7:30 PM, Sun 3 PM, Den Theatre, 1331 N. Milwaukee, 773-697-3830, prometheantheatre.org, \$30, \$25 seniors, \$15 students, military

Hall of presidents

Rick Cleveland's *Five Presidents* offers intriguing nuggets, but doesn't fully engage with its historical context.

American Blues Theater's Chicago premiere of ensemble member Rick Cleveland's 2015 play, about the April 27, 1994, meeting of Presidents Gerald Ford, Jimmy Carter, Ronald Reagan, George H.W. Bush, and Bill Clinton at former president Richard Nixon's funeral—the first time in history five U.S. presidents had met together at a public event—would make a great field trip for a high school class in American history. The play packs five great character studies into one itty-bitty (90-minute) show and is full of fun facts that might give you an edge on an AP exam: for example, the nugget that Gerald Ford, best known for his 1974 pardoning of Nixon, kept a quotation from a 1915 U.S. Supreme Court decision (*Burdick v. United States*) in his wallet stating that accepting a pardon implies a confession of guilt.

It is a testament to Cleveland's abilities as a writ-



er, and those of director Marty Higginbotham's A-list ensemble, that each president in this play looks, acts, and talks like a real, flawed human being, with his own insights, memories, and emotional baggage, and not like a rehashing of well-worn caricatures or the mildewed residue of a once carefully crafted public persona. James Leaming is particularly moving as an affable but visibly senile Reagan. (This funeral was his last major public appearance; that he was suffering from Alzheimer's disease would be announced later the same year.)

In the end, though, the evening feels more like a museum-worthy historic reenactment—memorializing a time when the country was (or at least seemed) calmer, saner, and significantly less fractured—than a fully engaging drama. It's entertaining for history buffs, for sure, but perhaps too reverential and cerebral for anyone who's not a student of late 20th-century American politics. —**JACK HELBIG** *FIVE PRESIDENTS* Through 10/19: Thu-Fri 7:30 PM, Sat 3 and 7:30 PM, Sun 2:30 PM; also Mon 10/14, 7:30 PM, and Thu 10/17, 2:30 PM, Stage 773, 1225 W. Belmont, 773-327-5252, americanbluestheater.com, \$29-\$39.

RR His brother's keeper
His Shadow finds a parable in sibling rivalry and political resistance.

Loy Webb's new play is subtitled "A Parable," and on those terms, it succeeds splendidly. By framing *His Shadow* through the lens of sibling jealousy, there are echoes of biblical brothers, particularly Joseph. But Teeny (Charles Andrew Gardner) doesn't want a coat of many colors; he desires a football jersey that doesn't share a number with his NFL hero big brother, Juice (Marcus D. Moore).

Teeny's single-minded determination to prove himself on the gridiron at his small college in the "Middle of Nowhere USA" collides with the demands from Rain (Anna Dauzvardis), a campus activist, that he protest the police killing of a young Black woman. But Teeny doesn't have the bandwidth for such ancillary stuff, despite being raised in Tommie Smith and John Carlos, a (fictional) town named for the Black athletes whose raised fists at the 1968 Mexico City Olympics presaged the "take a knee" protests of Colin Kaepernick and others. That is, until police violence hits close to home.

There are points in Webb's narrative where her parable framework veers toward didacticism (something that she avoided in her first play, *The Light*). But it's mostly a smart, nuanced portrait of how protesting itself sometimes operates within a framework of privilege. As

fellow teammate Kodak (Moore) angrily reminds Teeny, not everyone has other resources to fall back on if they lose a scholarship or a shot at the NFL as a result of their activism.

Wardell Julius Clark's direction and the trio of actors also highlight the easy joyous banter sprinkled throughout the play. Though Teeny's narrative trajectory may seem clear early on, watching him come to terms with himself, his family, and his social conscience still provides a relevant snapshot of what we ask of heroes and those who struggle in their shadows. —**KERRY REID** *HIS SHADOW* Through 10/12: Thu-Fri 7:30 PM, Sat 4 and 8 PM; also Sun 9/22 and 10/6, 3 PM, 16th Street Theatre, 6420 16th St., Berwyn, 708-795-6704, 16thstreettheater.org, \$30 reserved, \$22 general, \$18 Berwyn residents, low income, and military.

RR System overload
Love and Information creates a crazy quilt out of our mediated existence.

Kim McKean directs Caryl Churchill's 2012 assault on the senses disguised as a play. Assembled from dozens of fragmented vignettes breathlessly performed over 80 lightning-fast minutes, *Love and Information* leaves one feeling a bit whiplashed afterward. But the cumulative weight of what at first seems like cacophony makes itself felt if you just let it wash over you rather than looking for a narrative or an explicit point.

Strobe lights, glitchy TV monitors, and multiple references to social media and tabloid scandal enhance the overall portrait of a society that can't pay attention or sit still, but that desperately wants to connect, to have something to believe in. The overall effect is a sort of live-action dramatization of the Internet. It puts love, hate, jokes, advertising, and politics in a blender and occasionally spits out semicoherent bits. But as soon as one starts to get into one scene, it's gone, replaced by something completely unrelated.

By employing a crazy-quilt approach to storytelling, Churchill ably evokes the mediated existence most of us are currently drowning in. It's a place where context is removed, meaning is only fleetingly visible, and distraction passes for hope. If the purpose of art is to point a mirror at its audience, this is one piece of looking glass that could lead to utter despair. But it's also very hard to look away from. It's a kind of 1984 for 2019. —**DMITRY SAMAROV** *LOVE AND INFORMATION* Through 10/19: Thu-Sat 8 PM, Trap Door Theatre, 1655 W. Cortland, 773-384-7494, trapdoortheatre.com, \$20 Thu-Fri, \$25 Sat, also two-for-one Thu.

Tiny Beautiful Things ■ LIZ LAUREN

A little less conversation

The rise of house music could use more show, less tell in *Revolution Chicago*.

The rise of house music is a large chapter in Chicago's story, yet *Revolution Chicago's* retelling makes the genre an un compelling sidenote. Despite no support from his father and skepticism from his mother, Mickey "Mixin'" Oliver pursues a career DJing house music, eventually landing a gig at then-failing WBMX. As Mickey rises in prominence and WBMX rises in ratings, audience members are constantly reminded of the current state of house music and its influence on Chicagoans and folks around the world instead of being shown it through the story and action.

In several moments throughout the play (created by Oliver and Lidell Townsell and directed by Oliver), we hear how house music brought Chicagoans of all ethnicities together, yet there are no scenes reflecting this multiculturalism, not even a diverse house party. Several scenes update the audience on how many accolades Mickey and WBMX win, but there are few showing what those wins meant for the station and Mickey's larger career. More talking than showing from the ensemble makes the run time feel longer than it needs to be.

Comedic one-liners and impressive vocal renditions of Mickey's mixes by Anthony Hansen are high points of the play, yet the choreography by Brenda Good falls short of dance moves seen at house parties throughout Chicago during the genre's rise and even today. While there's no doubt that Oliver made great contributions to house music, this celebration disappoints when it comes to truly making audiences feel like they're back in the mid-80s where it all began. —**JANAYA GREENE** *REVOLUTION CHICAGO* Through 9/29: Thu-Fri 7:30 PM, Sat 3:30 and 7:30 PM, Sun 7 PM, Stage 773, 1225 W. Belmont, 773-327-5252, stage773.com, \$30-\$39.

RR Finding the sweet in the bitter
Tiny Beautiful Things puts Cheryl Strayed's "Dear Sugar" advice column onstage.

Before *Wild* vaulted her to fame and fortune, Cheryl Strayed offered literally free advice. She wrote (for free) the "Dear Sugar" column at the Rumpus from 2010-'12. Nia Vardalos of *My Big Fat Greek Wedding* fame decided that the columns, which were published in book form under the title *Tiny Beautiful Things*, were stageworthy.

They are—though admittedly it took a little while for Vanessa Stalling's staging at Victory Gardens to work its magic on me. But that's also in keeping with the tenor of the columns themselves. Strayed wrote them pseudonymously (as had Steve Almond, who had the gig before her), and the early insistence from readers that she reveal herself paradoxically clashes with their sometimes-needling observations that she tends to write about herself a lot. "I'll bet you think this has nothing to do with your question," she self-deprecatingly notes at one point.

It's hard to imagine this show working as well as it does without Janet Ulrich Brooks as Strayed. She brings the right mix of vinegar and sweetness to her Sugar, which makes the sections that begin to veer into emotional manipulation go down easy. Courtney O'Neill's set places the action in a cool gray-and-teal diner whose initial sterility grows warmer as Strayed builds trust with those who write to her. (August Forman, Eric Slater, and Jessica Dean Turner play all the letter writers with great emotional range, from droll to desperate.)



Vanya on the Plains JOE MAZZA

the ridiculousness, the mistakes, and the moral failings as we make our way through what Strayed describes as “the obliterated place” that is “equal parts destruction and creation.” —**KERRY REID** ***TINY BEAUTIFUL THINGS** Through 10/13: Wed-Fri 7:30 PM, Sat 3 and 7:30 PM, Sun 3 PM, Tue 7:30 PM, Victory Gardens Theater, 2433 N. Lincoln, 773-871-3000, victorygardens.org, \$31-\$65.*

RR Chekhov after the apocalypse
Vanya on the Plains sets the Russian master's play in a dystopic future, but doesn't annihilate all hope.

More postapocalyptic plays about staging Chekhov in people's living rooms, please! The digital has eclipsed the physical in this new show by playwright and theater instructor Jason Hedrick, directed by Kayla Adams. Feral vagabonds snort across empty stretches of what used to be America. Cops make the rounds of the few outposts of organized human life that still exist on the fringe. There are barely any more phones or screens now, only an Internet of vivid, government-sanctioned visualizations, called “dives,” that fuzz together dreams and reality past all distinction. Weeping in his chair is old man Elijah (Frank Nall), a “content moderator,” the world's worst job (pruning gruesome imagery from feeds all day—which is already a real job, god help us). Somehow, Elijah gets it into his head that what he wants for his birthday is for his batty relatives and housemates

There isn't a discernible narrative arc to the order of the letters, necessarily. But what does build is a sense that empathy requires the ability to sit with our own stories and those of others and not look away from the pain,

to put on a production of *Uncle Vanya*, Elijah's favorite play. To which the family's response, all down the line, is a resounding *What is a play?*

Well, what is a play? In an age of increasing disconnection, what theater has to offer more and more is a rebellion of the embodied against pixelation unto death. This play delivers a subtle analysis of our need for contact, with performances to match; each character's journey leads in some guise or other from numbness to feeling, from alienation to closeness, from information to wisdom. Vanya continues a steady run of life-affirming winners from this storefront off Grand. —**MAX MALLER** ***VANYA ON THE PLAINS** Through 10/27: Thu 7:30 PM, Fri-Sat 8 PM, Sun 3 PM, Artistic Home, 1376 W. Grand, 866-811-4111, theartistichome.org, \$28 Thu and Sun (\$20 students and seniors), \$34 Fri and Sat.*

Wimsey isn't always enough
Lifeline's adaptation of Dorothy Sayers's *Whose Body?* is fun, but not wholly absorbing.

Lifeline Theatre's stage has been something of a home away from home for dapper hobbyist detective Lord Peter Wimsey over the past few decades. The mystery-unraveling sleuth protagonist of many of English author Dorothy L. Sayers's crime novels has appeared in four different adaptations by Frances Limoncelli at the company, including this 2002 script dramatizing Sayers's debut full-length work of fiction.

On the same day a high-profile financier disappears, a freshly barbered corpse is discovered in a bathtub propped up and styled to resemble the missing man. Drawn to the oddity of the case, Wimsey (William Anthony Sebastian Rose II) teams up with his inspector confidante (John Drea) and manservant (Scott Danielson) to chase down clues that reveal a tangled scheme of business and medical malfeasance. Jess Hutchinson's cast leans into the buddy-comedy quipiness and droll soliloquies inspired by Sayers's style of storytelling, and there's plenty of fun to be had with this charming cast of actors throwing around outsize English dialects and broad character choices.

But even with a closely kept ear, the puzzle that drives the story evolves pretty quickly from intricate to inscrutable. Unlike in a novel, where world-building details have some room to breathe, the story here becomes strained underneath a torrent of proper nouns and red herrings, as well as arcane character backstories that are made only more confusing by double- and triple-casting. Clocking in at close to two and a half hours, Hutchinson's production builds a strong case for reading Sayers's books—the mystery of whether or not their stories fit onstage, though, remains unsolved. —**DAN JAKES** ***WHOSE BODY?** Through 10/27: Thu-Fri-7:30 PM, Sat 4 and 8 PM, Sun 4 PM, Lifeline Theatre, 6912 N. Glenwood, 773-761-4477, lifelinetheatre.com, \$45, \$35 seniors, \$20 students, military and day-of-performance rush tickets.*

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REVIEW

Ad Astra sends father-son conflict into space

Director James Gray's latest returns to the theme of the powerful but imperfect patriarch.

By **BEN SACHS**

Like the late Portuguese filmmaker Manoel de Oliveira, James Gray makes movies that suggest the work of a late 19th- or early 20th-century artist transported to the present. This may be somewhat intentional on Gray's part, as the New York-based writer-director has frequently cited artists from these periods as influences. He based the look of *The Yards* (2000) on the work of French realist painters, drew on the narrative structure of Dostoevsky's *White Nights for Two Lovers* (2009), and took inspiration from Puccini's operas for *The Immigrant* (2013). Yet one doesn't need to know these references to feel that Gray's movies are distinctly out of step with most contemporary American cinema. His directorial style communicates a certain stateliness and formality reminiscent of silent movies; his characterizations tend to be relatively clear-cut, with most of his subjects' behavior stemming from a combination of societal forces and parental influence; and his emotional content is generally direct.

What makes films like *We Own the Night* (2007) and *Two Lovers* so special is that they convey how our era might have looked to our ancestors—in particular, what people from the past might have focused on if they could consider how we interact with each other today. Gray's period dramas *The Immigrant* and *The Lost City of Z* (2016) achieve something similar: they make viewers feel comfortable in the past and better primed to navigate it. Gray's latest film, *Ad Astra*, might be described as a departure in that it's his first science-fiction film and his first to be set in the future, but these differences are merely superficial; the director's charmingly retrograde approach to

storytelling remains as pronounced as ever. The film's three acts are so clearly demarcated that it wouldn't feel out of place if a curtain came down after each one; the psychological conflicts are delineated in a clean, Freudian manner; and the themes are purposely timeless. As a result, *Ad Astra* seems to belong, refreshingly, to no era at all.

Gray has described the film as a cross between *2001: A Space Odyssey* and *Apocalypse Now*; and while the film betrays the influence of Stanley Kubrick's sci-fi masterpiece in its extremely detailed depiction of how space travel might look in the future (not to mention its chilly tone), the story feels less like Francis Ford Coppola's *Apocalypse* than it does Coppola's source material, Joseph Conrad's 1902 novella *Heart of Darkness*. Before the action begins, a title card informs us that, in the near future, outer space has been colonized and humanity has united in the mission to find and make contact with intelligent life outside our solar system. Roy McBride (Brad Pitt) is an astronaut whose father, Clifford (Tommy Lee Jones), remains the most decorated explorer in the history of the post-NASA space age, having led the first manned mission to Neptune. Clifford left earth when Roy was just 16 years old and hasn't been heard from in years, yet he's continued to influence his son after his disappearance. Roy has followed in his father's footsteps in terms of his career, and he's developed a fear of getting too close to other people. (In brief scenes, Gray shows us Roy's estranged wife, played by Liv Tyler, who essentially explains this to him and us.)

Soon after the movie begins, Roy, working on the surface of a giant space antenna, gets knocked off the structure by heavy objects



Ad Astra

falling to earth. Later he learns that these objects were jostled by cosmic rays emanating from the far reaches of the solar system, which have started causing disasters on earth. Scientists suspect that Roy's father may have triggered these rays from his space station on Neptune (from which he's long stopped sending communiques). To find out, someone must travel there to confront Clifford and, if he's the culprit, stop him from emitting more rays. Roy signs up for the job, partly out of a sense of responsibility and partly out of a desire to reunite with his old man.

Ad Astra charts Roy's journey, which is marked by a progressive loss of control: with each leg of the trip—first to the moon (which Gray depicts as a corporatized tourist trap reminiscent of the red planet of Paul Verhoeven's *Total Recall*), then to Mars, and finally to Neptune—Roy encounters new dangers and receives less support from other people. By the time he reaches his father, he is alone and emotionally shattered by his voyage.

Gray creates a compelling frisson between his classical narrative structure and his immersive filmmaking. The director likes to keep his camera close to the characters, thereby emphasizing their immediate experience, or else at a distant remove to convey the vastness of outer space. As usual in Gray's films, the rich sound design goes a long way in building the atmosphere; an especially inspired conceit is that the music and sound effects occur between large patches of silence, which brings a sonic component to the depiction of space's unforgiving immensity. One learns about the film's future society mainly from peripheral or background details. There are almost no direct references to discord on earth, but key lines of dialogue hint at bad times ahead. When another astronaut asks Roy whether he's seen combat, the hero replies he has—at the arctic circle. The post-NASA space program seems to be a military operation, suggesting that the

world's governments have managed to unite only through collective militarization. These details resonate, but generally in hindsight; the experience of watching *Ad Astra* is primarily visceral, as Gray ties viewers to Roy's physical exertion and peril.

Unfortunately Gray takes us out of the action almost as often as he immerses us in it. *Ad Astra* features some rather frustrating voice-over narration by Pitt, which basically explains all the film's metaphors and themes. We learn plenty about Roy's struggle to understand his father from what he tells us explicitly; ditto his sense of personal responsibility for his father's transgressions. This old-fashioned device is in keeping with Gray's predilections, but it also deprives viewers of the pleasure of sussing out the film's ideas for themselves. The narration isn't entirely flat-footed, however; the moments when Roy confesses his feelings of worry and self-doubt are moving precisely because they run counter to Pitt's withholding performance, which reveals next to nothing about what his character thinks. Gray creates a chasm between Roy's thoughts and actions that comes to seem as great as the ones Roy crosses in outer space, and this gulf poignantly reflects certain patterns of traditional male behavior, namely the tendency to suppress emotion in the name of duty. Still, I wouldn't have minded if Gray had scrapped the narration altogether, since that might have meant that the third-act revelations about Clifford wouldn't have been telegraphed from the first.

Then again, viewers who have followed Gray's career shouldn't be surprised to learn that Roy's father is a disappointment to his son, as powerful but imperfect father figures figure in nearly all of the director's seven features. In *Little Odessa* (1994), there was Maximilian Schell's self-regarding Russian emigre, a father of two good-for-noth-

AD ASTRA ★★★

Directed by James Gray. PG-13, 122 min. Now playing in wide release.

CHICAGO SOUTH ASIAN FILM FESTIVAL

9/19-9/22, various venues. Visit csaff.org for more info.

FILM

ing sons who cheats on his dying wife. In *The Yards*, James Caan played a corrupt factory owner who tries to do well by his extended family but is undone by his history of shady deals. *We Own the Night* featured both Robert Duvall's emotionally distant police chief and the Russian gangster (Moni Moshonov) who acts as a surrogate father to Duvall's wayward grown son. *The Lost City of Z* was the first Gray film to make a protagonist of its troubled father, explorer Percy Fawcett (Charlie Hunnam), who consciously neglects his family in his pursuit of the fabled Amazon location of the title. And now with *Ad Astra*, the director grants more narrative weight to the conflict between a father and son than ever before. It's no understatement to say that, in the movie, the fate of humanity depends on whether the hero can resolve his issues with his dad—one might say that Gray has taken his thematic concerns to a cosmic level. In drawing on and amplifying ideas that have appeared elsewhere in his work, Gray heightens *Ad Astra's* sense of familiarity, making the future seem like something out of the past. **A**



FESTIVAL

Tales from a diaspora

The Chicago South Asian Film Festival spotlights unheard stories.

By JANAYA GREENE

A Monsoon Date

The tenth annual Chicago South Asian Film Festival (CSAFF) features 65 films that center on the experiences of South Asians across the diaspora and shed light on a range of social issues that impact their communities. The festival kicks off with a series of films at the ShowPlace Icon Theatre and DePaul's CDM Theatre on Thursday and Friday, before Friday night's official opening event at Venue Six10, which features an awards ceremony and screenings of *Aapke Aa Jane Se* and *The Last Color*, which is directed by Michelin-star chef and *MasterChef India* host Vikas Khanna.

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races, and ethnicities,” says festival manager Jigar Shah.

To highlight those connections, festivalgoers will be treated to a prescreening reception where they can sample hors d'oeuvres and cocktails by Khanna, as well as a postscreening Q&A followed by a meet and greet with actors, directors, and other celebrities, including DJ Karsh Kale.

Films centering on LGBTQ stories and women's empowerment are another focus of CSAFF 2019. *Bulbul Can Sing* (directed by Rima Das) is a story about a girl in rural India who challenges the traditional values and expectations of her family, and *A Monsoon Date* (directed by Tanuja Chandra) is about a trans woman seeking a safe place to come into her identity.

In addition, the festival will host an LGBTQ panel discussion on Saturday evening, which includes Changra, actor Arjun Mathur (star of the Amazon Prime drama *Made in Heaven*), and pioneering trans Bollywood writer Gazal Dhaliwal.

The festival has grown since its 2010 debut, when it screened 16 films over two days at the Chicago Cultural Center, and according to Shah, it's grown in ways more significant than numbers alone.

“We're bringing such a wider variety of genres and other work from filmmakers to Chicago, and on top of that, our audience and community has really grown over the years. Awareness and education that's come to the Chicago community has grown incredibly; people have now started making sure these films are not just purely for entertainment, but they also have a message—a social message,” he says.

One special way the festival is celebrating its ten-year milestone is by introducing an augmented-reality booth where festivalgoers can try their hands at filmmaking through the powers of virtual reality. The inclusion of VR is yet another way that CSAFF encourages its attendees to reimagine the possibilities of what film can be.

“When people think about something from South Asia, people usually think about Bollywood or commercial cinema,” says Shah. “The whole intent for the CSAFF is to promote independent films and give platforms to filmmakers and student filmmakers who are so passionate about what they do and want to use this platform to show their artistic work.” 

 @janayagr



REELING: THE CHICAGO LGBTQ+ INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL
9/19-9/29, various venues, 773-293-1447, reelingfilmfestival.org, \$11-\$18, \$125 festival pass.

Mark Patton and exposes the impact that queer coding and homophobic horror tropes have had on shaping popular culture. Tomer Heymann's *Jonathan Agassi Saved My Life* pulls back the curtain on one of the most successful gay porn stars in the world.

There's also a substantial amount of trans representation at this year's fest, with 14 films that focus on various aspects of trans identity or feature trans protagonists. The short film program “Dreams of Another Body” puts trans narratives in the spotlight and reckons with people's relationship to their own flesh.

Reeling is a festival made by and for queer people, but queer stories have never been in the spotlight more than right now, thanks to the mainstream success of shows such as FX's *Pose*. It's possible that this year's fest might have more of a crossover audience than ever before.

“Many of these films will have a life because there is more of a mainstream appetite for queer cinema,” says Knight. “Which is, like, what? Am I still alive?” says Knight, who's still astonished by the rise in demand in recent years.

Reeling is a chance for queer audiences to see all aspects of ourselves represented at the movies—not just scraps of representation within Hollywood blockbusters. And as queer filmmakers push themselves and break out from traditional conventions, we finally get to see ourselves as the complex heroes and villains of our own stories.

“This really is the one time and place where all of this queer stuff is going to be on a big screen where you can sit with your tribe and experience it,” says Knight. “There's nothing like watching a queer-themed movie with a majority-queer audience.”

Knight adds, “You're not going to see *Avengers 76* during Reeling, but you're going to see really great stories, great performances, and you're going to be surprised and delighted.” 

 @dykediscourse

FESTIVAL

Reeling 'em in

The Reeling International Film Festival celebrates queer history, modern life, and plenty of subcultures.

By CODY CORRALL

The Reeling International Film Festival returns this week for its 37th year to—as *The Real Housewives of Beverly Hills* star Erika Girardi has famously said—give the gays everything they want.

Reeling doesn't curate its selections based on a theme, and this year's body of work emphasizes the growing diversity of queer stories in narrative, genre, and form.

“We're seeing more genre,” features programmer Richard Knight Jr. says. “Fewer coming-out stories and more, I don't know, a gay thriller. Films where the characters just happens to be gay, but it's a thriller or a musical or a broad comedy.”

Some of this year's features include *Two in the Bush: A Love Story*, a bisexual and poly-amorous rom-com set in a sex dungeon by Laura Madalinski; *Bit*, a vampire flick with a

lesbian trans woman protagonist directed by Brad Michael Elmore; and *The Shiny Shrimps*, a comedy about an amateur gay water polo team in France that was written and directed by Cédric Le Gallo and Maxime Govare.

Reeling's crop of documentaries offers an equally wide breadth of stories, with films that tell and preserve queer history, films that represent what it's like to be queer in this very moment, and films that investigate wonderful, niche queer subcultures. “This is a culture that you do not see represented,” says Knight of the films.

Among the documentaries, Megan Rossman's *The Archivettes* chronicles the formation of the Lesbian Herstory Archives and grapples with activism in an increasingly politically charged time. Roman Chimienti and Tyler Jensen's *Scream, Queen! My Nightmare on Elm Street* explores the story of actor

NOW PLAYING

RR The Devil, Probably

Robert Bresson's penultimate feature (1977)—his only original script apart from his early short *Affaires Publiques* and his masterpiece *Au Hasard Balthazar*—is a ringing indictment of the modern world, centered on the suicide of a disaffected 20-year-old Parisian. There's something mannered and at times even freakish about Bresson's handling of well-clothed adolescents and his multifaceted editorializing—which improbably recalls Samuel Fuller in its anger and dynamic energy—but the power and conviction of this bitter, reflective parable are remarkable. Not a masterwork perhaps, but certainly the work of a master, and, judging from the work of many of his young French disciples (including Leos Carax), one of his most influential features. In French with subtitles. —**JONATHAN ROSENBAUM** 95 min. 35 mm. Wed 9/25, 7:30 PM. Northeastern Illinois University

RR Jay Myself

The engrossing subject of this documentary, 88-year-old photographer and artist Jay Maisel, is a passionate collector with a special fondness for everyday objects. "Objects are there for you only if you really see them," Maisel explains to filmmaker Stephen Wilkes, who is also his former intern. "And art is, to some effect, trying to make others see what you see." Wilkes accomplishes this in a portrait of his mentor, surveying with humor, empathy, and depth the six-story, 36,000-square-foot former bank that Maisel bought in Manhattan's SoHo neighborhood in the 1970s and transformed into his home and studio, filling it with his eye-catching knickknacks, such as colorful glass bottles and a collection of table legs. Wilkes trains his camera on this spectacular enclave and Maisel himself as the latter prepares to part with the building for \$55 million. The film glides seamlessly through past and present, noting Maisel's accomplishments over the decades through a combination of talking heads and archival footage while anchoring the narrative in Maisel's own words and the items he holds dear. The building is a character itself; Maisel describes it as "a refuge, an obligation, a source, and a drain for creative energy." In the end, the viewer might find herself both feeling the loss at the center of Maisel and Wilkes's letting-go process and craving a similar grotto of her own. —**LEAH PICKETT** 79 min. Fri 9/20, 2 and 6:15 PM; Sat 9/21, 6:45 and 8:30 PM; Sun 9/22, 1:15 PM; Mon 9/23, 6 PM; Tue 9/24, 8:15 PM; Wed 9/25, 6:15 PM; and Thu 9/26, 8:15 PM. Gene Siskel Film Center

Love Me or Leave Me

A musical weepie (1955) with Doris Day as the 1920s singing star Ruth Etting and James Cagney as the gangster who put her on top. She drinks, he beats her up—it's surprisingly gritty and, at moments, convincing. With Cameron Mitchell and Robert Keith; Charles Vidor (*Gilda*) directed in color and CinemaScope. —**DAVE KEHR** 122 min. 35 mm. Sat 9/21-Sun 9/22, 11:30 AM. Music Box

RR M

Peter Lorre stars in Fritz Lang's sympathetic and terrifying story of a child murderer, filmed in Germany in 1931. The underworld joins forces with the police in tracking down Lorre's plump, helpless maniac because his atrocities have interrupted the course of crime-as-usual. The moral issues are complex and deftly handled: Lorre is at once entirely innocent and absolutely evil. Lang's detached, modified expressionist style gives the action a plastic beauty: the geometry of the images is reflected in the geometry of the plot, as every



Jay Myself

piece of film clicks together on its way to the inevitable climax. Two lines meet, and Lorre is at the center. —**DAVE KEHR** 99 min. Showing in a restored 111-minute version. Critic and artist Fred Camper lectures at the Tuesday screening. Fri 9/20, 3:45 PM, and Tue 9/24, 6 PM. Gene Siskel Film Center

Melancholic

Anyone who's completed any type of formal educational program understands the disillusionment that can strike almost immediately after it's all over. Some call it "post-graduation depression": a sometimes crippling despondency that can follow the sudden uprooting of your regular routine, the pressure to find employment, the fear of failure, and the anxiety of no longer having your days laid out for you. In his feature debut, Japanese film director Seiji Tanaka explores these familiar issues but heightens the stakes. Kazuhiko, a character reminiscent of the aimless Holden Caulfield, has just graduated and moved back to his parents' home with no prospects for

full-time work. Eventually he starts picking up janitorial shifts at a bathhouse. But when the bathhouse becomes the scene of a series of murders, Kazuhiko realizes his place of employment isn't as unassuming as it seems. What starts off as a gloomy coming-of-age film quickly spirals into a gritty story about Japan's criminal underworld. The viewers watch as the sulking yet charming Kazuhiko (played with nuance and skill by Yoji Minagawa) is transformed through this job, finding a surprising sense of purpose and even getting a girlfriend. And yet, it's clear that his place in this world can't last. In Japanese with subtitles. —**NOËLLE D. LILLEY** 113 min. Tanaka and actor/producer Yoji Minagawa attend the screening. Wed 9/25, 8 PM. Gene Siskel Film Center

ALSO PLAYING

Gate Theater Film Festival

Seven programs of short experimental films from the

1940s-'60s that screened at the New York City venue the Gate Theatre in the late 1960s. Organized by local curator and scholar Amelia Ishmael, the series includes work (all but one in 16 mm) by Jack Smith, George and Mike Kuchar, Stan Brakhage, Paul Bartel, Bruce Baillie, Maya Deren, and others. Tue 9/24-Mon 9/30, 7 PM. At Filmfront (1740 W. 18th). For a full schedule, visit filmfront.org.

Vision Portraits

Filmmaker Rodney Evans directed this documentary about his own vision loss and that of three other artists: a writer, dancer, and photographer. 78 min. Evans attends the 7 PM Friday and Saturday screenings. The film will also be shown with open audio description in theater two; visit facets.org for those showtimes. Facets Cinematheque

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Sheila Rashid makes possibilities you can wear

The Chicago designer's unisex clothes give people the freedom to define themselves.

Written BY ARTHUR E. HAYNES II

Photography BY MORGAN ELISE JOHNSON

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the **TRIBE**

Sheila Rashid is on the hunt. The 31-year-old Chicago designer slips in and out of the aisles at Fishman's Fabrics in the South Loop, her eyes lingering on a vibrant cheetah-print spool.

"I like a lot of upholstery-weight fabrics," she says. "Anything that's kind of movable,

breathable, and soft. That's one of my favorite things to look for."

More than any particular pattern or texture, Rashid has come looking for inspiration. "Usually I start with the fabric, and then I do flat sketches," she explains, reaching into the racks to pull out a beautiful wine-red spool.

"Even if I don't know what I'm going to make out of it yet, I still know it can be a fabric that I can basically profit off of."

The Sheila Rashid Brand attracted interest around the world in 2016, when Chance the Rapper wore a pair of Rashid's now-famous drop-crotch overalls at the MTV Video Music Awards. Since then, her designs have turned up on the likes of Zendaya, Fucci, Bella Hadid, and Lena Waithe. When ComplexCon came to Chicago for the first time this past July, Rashid was one of four local designers it named "Brands to Watch," with her own booth on the convention floor.

Today, Rashid is successful enough that she can afford to let her imagination guide her. No fabric, no idea, is out of reach. But it wasn't always that way. Fishman's, now a veritable playground for the designer, was once her own personal Everest.

"I remember the first time I came to Fishman's probably had to be over ten years ago," Rashid says. "At that time, I wasn't shopping at Fishman's, because most of these fabrics are expensive—but for good reason." Back then, she would come to the store just to look at the fabrics and dream, or sometimes snag something on sale.

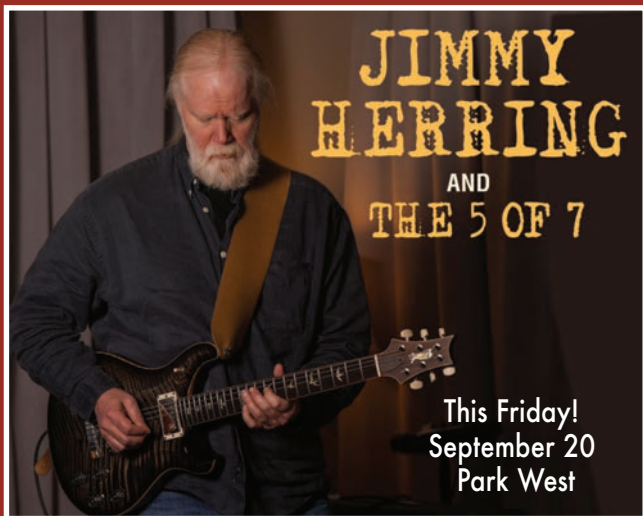
The store's owner, Gregg Fishman, claims that its inventory consists exclusively of western European imports, and the prices reflect that: they range from \$3 to \$300 per yard, depending on the fabric. At a typical JoAnn Fabrics, they might start at \$1.99 per yard and top out at \$40 to \$60.

"I knew I would come back here one day," Rashid says, remembering her years as ➔



Sheila Rashid used to come to Fishman's Fabrics just to window-shop and dream, but now she can afford to buy. **BY** MORGAN ELISE JOHNSON

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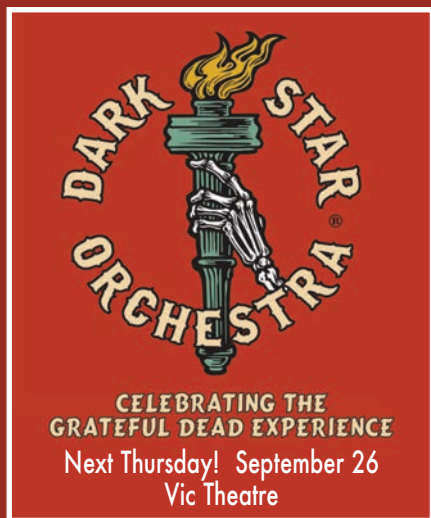
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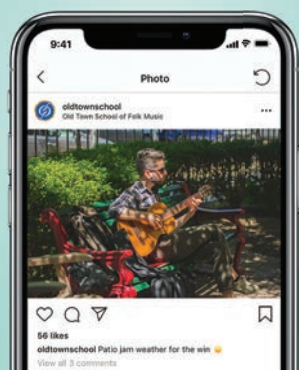
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Outside Fishman's
in the South Loop
MORGAN ELISE JOHNSON



At Sheila Rashid's
studio in the Marshall
Lofts, she and a model
wearing her designs
get ready to shoot a
Nissan commercial.
COURTESY OF SHEILA RASHID

continued from 38

a window shopper. “I knew this was the spot that I always wanted to work up to.”

This spring, Rashid’s dream finally came true. She secured a sponsorship from Nissan to create a collection for the 2019 edition of the Wearable Art Gala, Tina Knowles-Lawson’s annual philanthropic fashion-centric celebration. The theme for the event was “A Journey to the Pride Lands,” but Rashid’s challenge was more specific: her collection was supposed to blend the aesthetic of the 2019 Nissan Rogue with that of Disney’s new live-action version of *The Lion King*.

With a sizable budget at her disposal, Rashid made a beeline for Fishman’s. It was the first time she’d ever spread her wings in the store. “It felt good to have a budget and know I don’t have any restrictions,” Rashid says. That feeling—the culmination of more than a decade of dream chasing and diligence—stuck with her all the way through the event. “I just knew I had the best fabrics and I had the best craftsmanship, so it was good. I

just felt confident.”

In 2005, when baggy jeans, tall tees, and streetwear brands such as Billionaire Boys Club and Icecream reigned supreme, Rashid was a junior at Kenwood Academy. She found her calling by drawing on T-shirts for her high school friends. Rashid was a huge N.E.R.D. fan, and her earliest pieces were shirts that filtered the group’s colorful, playfully futuristic, anime-influenced aesthetic through the street style of the day. (Pharrell Williams of N.E.R.D. had cofounded BBC.) She also took inspiration from her favorite Adult Swim cartoons at the time, especially *Aqua Teen Hunger Force*.

“It would be characters such as Hamburger, French Fry, and Drink, and I would just hand-paint it,” she says, not quite remembering the names Meatwad, Frylock, and Master Shake.

Rashid’s classmates loved her shirts, and before she knew it, she was in business. Her high school friend Marcus Ivory, now a stylist in New York, was also making shirts and hoodies as part of a streetwear collection he called Nouveau Riche. Once Rashid’s creations

caught on, he asked her to join him. The collaboration was a local success, generating buzz for both partners and their brand among Chicago streetwear enthusiasts.

After high school, Rashid began studying design at Columbia College Chicago in late 2006. She ultimately had to drop out due to financial pressures, but her fashion education was just beginning. Immediately after leaving Columbia in 2009, Rashid studied under designer Horacio Nieto, then based in Chicago. In 2010, she broke out on her own with a fashion show in Pilsen—her very first solo outing. She moved to New York the following year and debuted a collection at Brooklyn Fashion Week, the first to include her popular drop-crotch designs.

Rashid couldn’t afford to stay in New York for long, though, and she returned to Chicago in 2012. But the design thread she introduced there has persisted all the way to Chance’s VMA overalls and beyond. In a way, it started her on a victory lap that brought her back to Fishman’s for the Wearable Art Gala. That return was more than a merely symbolic triumph. “I just felt free,” she says. “Like, I can get any fabric out of here now.”

Rashid has little use for gender norms, and almost all of her designs, from her early T-shirts to the work that’s made her famous in recent years, have been unisex. “Doing unisex clothing was just kind of a reflection of my own style,” she says. “In high school, everybody was wearing baggy clothes and stuff like that. So I didn’t really get much pushback for that.” She pauses to think. “Maybe from my mom when I first came out” as a lesbian, she adds. “But then again, I would actually hide my baggy clothes until I got really comfortable around my mom.”

She remembers being afraid of how her mother would respond to her sexuality and her style. “I would get on the train on the way to school, in high school, and I would bring a change of clothes and actually change on the train,” she recalls. “If anything, I had to get comfortable, like, with myself.”

Rashid’s high school struggle certainly informs her present-day mission as a designer: “to create pieces that confront and curtail gender identity.” Her work helps other people find the same sort of freedom of expression that’s so central to her own story, and gives them an opportunity to shake off labels and be their most authentic selves. 

 @TheTRiibe

The Block Beat multimedia series is a collaboration with the TRiibe (thetriibe.com) that roots Chicago musicians in places and neighborhoods that matter to them. Video accompanies this story at chicagoreader.com.

A Reader staffer shares three musical obsessions, then asks someone (who asks someone else) to take a turn.



The Frogs: the late Dennis Flemion and his brother, front man Jimmy Flemion

© COURTESY THE ARTIST

LEOR GALIL

Reader staff writer

A YouTube post of the unreleased Frogs song “Pleasure” I hadn’t given much time to this oddball Milwaukee alt-rock duo, despite their massive cult following, but I went down a rabbit hole after indie label the End of All Music reissued their notorious second album, 1989’s *It’s Only Right and Natural*, in July. My journey included some YouTube digging, during which I found what seems to be a live recording of front man Jimmy Flemion performing an acoustic version of an unreleased Frogs song called “Pleasure.” He introduces it with an anecdote about including the song on a cassette the band gave to Billy Corgan in 1993, and the main guitar melody in “Pleasure” sounds a lot like the one in Smashing Pumpkins’ hit “1979,” from 1995’s *Mellon Collie and the Infinite Sadness*. “Watch the papers for the lawsuit,” Flemion says. The Frogs are well-known as provocateurs and trolls, but their relationship with Corgan is actually cordial—he wrote their bio for the new reissue. Which makes me even more curious to know what happened when Corgan first heard “Pleasure.”



Several cassettes from the Mississippi Records tape series

© MAGIC IAN

Champion Sound Band, “Whatever” Lord, Anastasia Antoinette’s diaphanous, subtly earthy vocals bring this nimble 2018 neosoul single by D.C.’s Champion Sound Band to another level.

Flesh of the Stars, *Mercy* Chicago’s Flesh of the Stars released this sweeping, super-clean doom album in June, but its elegant melodies and sense of old-world decay make *Mercy* feel like it was meant for fall all along.

MAGIC IAN Musician and owner of Maximum Pelt Records

Mississippi Records’ tape series I’ve been a fan of oddball archivists Mississippi Records for a long time now, largely due to their work with Dead Moon. I checked out their shop in Portland a few years ago and discovered their cassette mixtape series. There are more than 100 titles, with very basic hand-drawn, photocopied artwork. Apparently hastily cut and folded by hand, the J-cards give these tapes the look and feel of mixes you’d make for a friend. The content on each tape is as varied as Mississippi’s catalog, including deep cuts of roots music from all over the world. The mixes’ short runs and DIY look lets me imagine they were gifts just for me.

Rocking out on wheels We’re a few months into the great e-scooter experiment in Chicago, and I’ve made up my mind. I don’t like them. I like the concept, but in practice they’ve been an unmitigated nightmare. Not only are most people completely unqualified to ride e-scooters, but when you go to use one, most of the time it doesn’t work for one of a variety of reasons. That being said, the Wheels e-scooters have Bluetooth speakers on them, and flying up Milwaukee Avenue blasting the new King Gizzard while staring

down all the stroller pushers has been one of the greatest joys of my summer.

Negative Scanner and Oozing Wound at Bricktown on August 30 Seeing two of Chicago’s most-hyped acts playing a sweaty warehouse flashed me back to 2012. Any kids reading this should drop out of SAIC and start a DIY space. It worked for me, kinda.



Ohtis © ALEXA VISCIOUS

ADAM SCHUBERT Musician in Cafe Racer, Ruins, and Husk

Ohtis I first heard the Ohtis song “Pervert Blood” through my girlfriend Alexa. The initial feeling I had was, “Wow, they have a crazy voice.” Once I listened to the lyrics more closely, I realized that the band’s latest record, this spring’s *Curve of Earth*, is all about the process of recovery—something I can relate to personally. It captures the messy details that come back to you the longer you stay clean, and how staying clean can even become messy in itself.

Crack Cloud I like English postpunk band Wire, like everyone else does. For a while, I was very into their album *Chairs Missing*. I was desperate to find something that gave me that same feeling, and a friend mentioned Canadian group Crack Cloud to me. When I first listened to their debut record, I knew it was exactly what I was looking for. They call themselves a “mixed-media collective” rather than a band, and I really like that idea as well as that pretension. I also discovered that they are . . . sober, so naturally they became my new favorites.

Bunny My first show in Chicago, I shared a bill with a band called Bunny. I was struck by the honesty of singer Jessica Viscius, the pluck and sass of bassist Alexa Viscius, and the ripping solos of guitarist/comedian Tim Makowski. After getting to know them and falling in love with Alexa, I’ve been able to see more of their shows. I’ve discovered that Jessica writes the most beautiful, honest, raw songs I have ever heard from anyone, anywhere, the end. 📺



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THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 26 8PM

Jonathan Wilson

with special guest Josh T. Pearson

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OPEN MIC ON TUESDAY EVENINGS (EXCEPT 2ND)

Recommended and notable shows and critics' insights for the week of September 19

MUSIC

ALL AGES FREE

PICK OF THE WEEK

Saxophonist Miguel Zenón interprets the music of legendary salsa singer Ismael 'Maelo' Rivera



© NOAH SHAYE

MIGUEL ZENÓN QUARTET

Thu 9/19 through Sat 9/21, 8 and 10 PM, and Sun 9/22, 4, 8, and 10 PM,
Jazz Showcase, 806 S. Plymouth, \$25-\$45. **ALL**

SAXOPHONIST AND COMPOSER Miguel Zenón is a MacArthur "genius grant" recipient who creates jazz that moves seamlessly between the experimental and the folkloric in an ongoing exploration of his Puerto Rican identity. Many of his 12 studio albums as a bandleader reference and highlight diverse arrays of the island's genres and musical figures without ever mimicking them directly. The most recent, *Sonero: The Music of Ismael Rivera*, honors legendary Puerto Rican composer and salsa singer Ismael "Maelo" Rivera. On this tour, Zenón brings a brilliant quartet of longtime collaborators: Venezuelan pianist Luis Perdomo adds precisely percussive, muscular notes to Zenón's astonishingly fluid sax, bassist Hans Glawischnig provides a supple, smooth foundation of tones, and exploratory Puerto Rican drummer Henry Cole creates the groove's explosive, complex subtext. Rivera, who passed away in 1987 at age 55, specialized in a distinctly Puerto Rican style of soneo, an improvisational form of singing; his style was so revered that he became known as El Sonero Mayor (the greatest sonero, that is). In the 1950s and early 1960s, Rivera was the lead vocalist of Cortijo y Su Combo, led by famed composer Rafael Cortijo, which transformed the repertoires of Afro-Rican vocal and percussive traditions bomba and plena into contemporary dance-band music. After the group disbanded, Rivera helped lay the foundation for the distinctive Fania-style Puerto Rican salsa that emerged in New York City later in the 60s, creating seminal tracks and beginning his conquest of the dance-music world at large. Zenón has developed fascinating takes on Rivera's signature tunes, including "El Negro Bombón," which tells the tragic story of a Black man murdered for having big lips, and "Las Caras Lindas," a "Black is beautiful" anthem by Catalino "Tite" Curet. The saxophonist brilliantly connects the dots between Puerto Rico's improvisational-music traditions and his own brand of trailblazing, avant-garde jazz. —**CATALINA MARIA JOHNSON**

THURSDAY19

CEDRIC BURNSIDE 8 PM, SPACE, 1245 Chicago Ave., Evanston, \$22-\$35. **ALL**

It's been said that you don't really notice a heyday till it's over, and the decade from the mid-1990s till the mid-2000s was a glorious time for modern Delta blues. Artists such as T-Model Ford, Paul "Wine" Jones, and Robert "Bilbo" Walker came into

the national spotlight playing blues festivals and rock clubs alike, proving that authentic blues could cross over between audiences and generations—and those bluesmen certainly rocked. Several of them recorded for the Fat Possum label (which also made the occasional odd attempt at incorporating hip-hop and techno into southern trance blues), but sadly most of the musicians were so advanced in age that many passed away within a few years of their newfound celebrity. The kingpin of that loose group was R.L. Burnside, who was a point man of

Mississippi juke-joint blues until his death in 2005. His grandson Cedric began touring with him as a drummer in his early teens, and after playing in a variety of projects of his own, he started stepping out as a formidable singer-guitarist. Cedric knows how to hang on one chord and groove the way his grandfather and his contemporaries did, and rather than reworking older standards, he writes new lyrics to go along with familiar grooves. And though a touch of funk shows up every now and then, he never strays into blooze-rock territory. I'm inclined

MUSIC

to believe that there's still a viable Delta blues scene in Mississippi, even though it doesn't get the exposure it did in the 90s, when the press popularized the term "punk blues" as a hook. Punk or not, Cedric Burnside keeps those classic blues feelings going strong. —JAMES PORTER

WOLF EYES Mukqs & Sharkula and Glyders open. 8:30 PM, Empty Bottle, 1035 N. Western, \$12. 21+

Detroit-based duo Wolf Eyes have been one of the country's most important experimental-music acts for more than 20 years, but they've also developed a mainstream following due to their presence in the world of viral meme Instagram accounts—it's nearly impossible to talk about the band without bringing it up. For the past few years, longtime Wolf Eyes member John Olson has been operating the Instagram account inzane.johnny, and he's racked up more than 100,000 followers by posting dozens of ridiculous memes a day, including takes on the standard Sponge Bob and Drake templates as well as relatively heady content focused on trolling Steely Dan, Bard College, and experimental guitarist Bill Nace. Olson's relentlessness in shitposting is matched by his musical output: since he joined Wolf Eyes in 2000, four years after Nate Young launched the band as a solo project, they've put out hundreds of recordings. This nonstop barrage of out-there, freaked-out sounds mixes up electronic ambience, crushing noise, industrial minimalism, and skull-rattling power electronics. Lately, Olson and Young have been pioneering a genre they've dubbed "psycho jazz"—dark soundscapes smeared with processed woodwinds and effects-bent vocals running over simple electronic beats. Wolf Eyes have always been challenging and intense, and they don't seem to be slowing their pace: as I write this, Olson has posted on Instagram about a brand-new tour-only Wolf Eyes release. It's amazing that he

can still find the time to expand the group's sonic palette, considering how much of his life he spends posting Saint Paul vs. Minneapolis memes. —LUCA CIMARUSTI

MIGUEL ZENÓN QUARTET See *Pick of the Week* at left. 8 and 10 PM, Jazz Showcase, 806 S. Plymouth, \$25-\$45. 18+

FRIDAY20

BABYMETAL Avatar opens. 7:30 PM, Byline Bank Aragon Ballroom, 1106 W. Lawrence, \$53-\$304. 18+

Babymetal have really just one joke, but it's a solid one. Since the band's self-titled debut album in 2014, their formula has become familiar: Suzuka Nakamoto (Su-metal) sings chipper Japanese J-pop while dressed in gothy black dresses, and metalhead producer Key Kobayashi (Kobametal) provides a background of chunky death riffage and lightning-fast technical guitar solos. On the recent singles released ahead of their forthcoming album, *Metal Galaxy* (BMD Fox/Toy's Factory/Amuse, Inc.), Babymetal don't diverge from the blueprint—but they do demonstrate again why it's been so successful. On the English-language version of "Elevator Girl," Su-metal sings with adorable menace, "Hey lady... no matter what you say or what you do / You're going da da da da down." It's a glimpse into the bleak, horror-movie heart of pop—an uncaring machine that inevitably grinds all resistance beneath it in its quest for world domination. As the catchy chorus kicks in ("Girl! We're going up! / Girl! We're going down!"), you realize that metal was always supposed to be about rainbows and puppies and Cthulhu plush toys. Purists may be irritated that Babymetal's novelty has become an institution, but everyone knows metal bands tour forever—it's best to just raise those Hello Kitty lighters and enjoy it. —NOAH BERLATSKY

BRITTANY HOWARD *MonoNeon* opens. 7:30 PM, Riviera Theatre, 4746 N. Racine, \$50. 18+

The thought of publicly airing painful events from your past may make you cringe, but soul baring can also be cathartic or even necessary. Brittany Howard, the guitarist and front woman of Alabama Shakes, shares a glimpse into some of the challenges she's faced on her new solo album, *Jaime* (ATO), named for her sister, who died of the rare eye cancer retinoblastoma at age 13, when Howard was nine. Howard has said she wanted to create the album—and speak about painful things, such as saying her sister's name—as a way to heal and to help others feel better about themselves. The former postal carrier has previously branched out from Alabama Shakes in the countrified all-woman trio Bermuda Triangle and as leader of retro-punk group Thunderbitch, but this deeply personal album is her first under her own name. On *Jaime*, Howard confronts life's obstacles against a mash-up of rock, R&B, gospel, funk, jazz, and country—which seems only natural from someone who learned to sing in church and names Prince and Elvis as influenc- ➔



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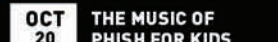
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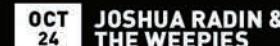
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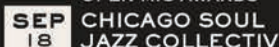
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continued from 43

es. “Goat Head” describes the discrimination she and her parents, an interracial couple, faced in the small Alabama town where she grew up—her father once found the tires of his car slashed and the head of a goat in the back seat. On the ballad “Georgia,” Howard makes use of her broad vocal range as she recalls her first crush on another girl and how she longed to express her feelings. But there are upbeat tunes as well: “Stay High,” for instance, is a moseying, soulful number about family, community, and not letting the daily grind harsh your buzz. Don’t come out expecting to hear Alabama Shakes tunes, though: on this tour, Howard and her eight-piece backup band have been playing her solo material and throwing in a few covers. —KRISTEN LAMBERT

MAN MAN *Grlwood opens. 9 PM, Sleeping Village, 3734 W. Belmont, \$18. 21+*

Since they got their start in Philadelphia’s underground scene in the early 2000s, Los Angeles-based band Man Man have been an undeniably unique voice in off-the-wall rock ‘n’ roll. Led by singer, songwriter, and pianist Ryan Kattner (aka Honus Honus), known for his idiosyncratic sing-scream vocal style, Man Man spent their first decade morphing from a group specializing in oddball Tom Waits-ian tunes with a vaudeville vibe into a decidedly polished pop ensemble with a broad approach. Over the years, Kattner has refined his raw, oft-shrieked vocals into a deep croon punctuated with yells and yelps for effect. Man Man’s most recent album, 2013’s eclectic *On Oni Pond* (Anti-), is a retro,

groove-based collection based on the core duo of Kattner and drummer Christopher Powell (aka Pow Pow). Colored with a dozen other instruments—horns, strings, marimba, keyboards, backing vocals—it worms through 50s and 60s rock, synth-pop, doo-wop, dub, and even a ukulele ballad (“Deep Cover”). Following Kattner’s 2016 solo debut as Honus Honus and the 2017 sophomore album by Mister Heavenly (his collaboration with Nicholas Thorburn of Islands and Joe Plummer of Shins), Man Man are back this fall as a six-piece with a pair of new songs for Sub Pop’s Singles Club series. “Beached” is one of the band’s catchiest numbers to date, with upbeat melodies, reverbed garage-rock guitar front and center, and eccentric wordplay from Kattner about indifference in a world going to hell (“Hot to trot, born to rot / You’re livin’ it up / On the doomsday clock”).

“Witch” is closer to classic Man Man, riding hard synth and horn grooves while Kattner and company get vocally quirky and lyrically silly, narrating a hallucinogenic walk in the park. As the group prepare to release their sixth LP, expect to hear these two tunes among a smattering of new jams on this highly entertaining monthlong U.S. tour. —SCOTT MORROW

LEE “SCRATCH” PERRY & SUBATOMIC
SOUND SYSTEM 8 PM, Subterranean, 2011 W. North, \$35. 21+

There are at least three editions of the album *Blackboard Jungle Dub* by reggae provocateur Lee “Scratch” Perry, each one with a different track list-



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MUSIC



Brittany Howard
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ing (and sometimes a different title). It's arguably the world's first dub album, but whether that distinction is accurate or not, it does serve to delineate Perry's exploration of a recording studio's possibilities. Four years after the release of the album's earliest incarnation, 1973's *Upsetters 14 Dub Black Board Jungle*, the Jamaican producer scaled even greater technical heights when he helmed the sessions for the Congos' *Heart of the Congos*, setting the vocal trio within a sonic context that reached well beyond reggae, dub, and R&B to approach some sort of billowing psychedelic apex. The first edition of *Black Board* included the track "Kaya Skank" (later "Sin Semilla Kaya Dub"), a version of a cut Bob Marley had recorded as early as 1971 and that in 1978 landed on Marley's tenth album, *Kaya*. Perry's artistic largesse was a catalyst for Marley's stardom, and more than four decades later, the producer and vocalist continues to engage new generations of devotees. For this tour, which celebrates the 45th anniversary of *Black Board*, the 84-year-old Perry is backed by Brooklyn's Subatomic Sound System, a group of mostly younger performers and veteran percussionist Larry McDonald, who's provided backing for uncountable Jamaican linchpins as well as luminaries such as Gil Scott-Heron. —**DAVE CANTOR**

LIL KEED With Lil Gotit and featuring Slimelife Shawty and Paper Lovee. 6:30 PM, Avondale Music Hall, 3336 N. Milwaukee, \$25-\$100. 🍷

Rising rapper Lil Keed grew up along Cleveland Avenue in Atlanta's Zone 3 neighborhood, which has also been home to one of the most colorful and creative forces in the past decade of hip-hop: Young Thug. At 21, Keed is part of a youthful crop of Atlanta MCs who've studied Thug's work and learned how to wring a rainbow of emotion out of a single syllable. Keed buckled down and gave rap his full attention in 2016, and since then he's ridden that style to fame. Last year, he broke out nationally with "Nameless," where he slathers bittersweet vocals about a lustful fling atop a slow, whirling instrumen-

tal. By the end of 2018, Keed had signed to Thug's YSL Records, all but inviting listeners to hunt for similarities between the two MCs. As Keed told *XXL* earlier this year, he frequently gets compared to Thug: "They can't compare me to nobody else. I learned from him. I incorporated my own style but I don't sound like him. You know Thug when you hear him; I don't sound like Thug." On June's *Long Live Mexico* (YSL/300), though, a lengthy and sometimes laborious mixtape whose songs often blur together, Keed does sound like Thug, especially on the two tracks where Thug appears—the student seems keen on following his teacher's lead, sometimes mirroring his energy. Keed makes the case for his distinctiveness much better when he's on his own: his hiccuping "whoas" on the hook for "HBS" could've powered the entire mixtape. —**LEOR GALIL**

VIDEO AGE *J Fernandez and Sports Boyfriend* open. 9:30 PM, Hideout, 1354 W. Wabansia, \$12. 21+

On their second album, 2018's *Pop Therapy* (Inflated Records), New Orleans indie duo Video Age liberally apply the glassy, frictionless keyboards and cheesy affectations of 80s synth-pop. But fortunately, Ray Micarelli (drums) and Ross Farbe (guitar, vocals, production) aren't interested in simply replicating the unmistakable sounds of the Reagan years—the duo transplant them into a slightly different context, building a connection to some of modern indie pop's illustrious ancestors. Video Age have cited Donald Fagen and Paul McCartney as influences, and *Pop Therapy* nods to more than just the digital production of Fagen's classic 1982 LP, *The Nightfly*—it borrows the sly, sophisticated, slightly bent songwriting of both stars' 80s work. Farbe and Micarelli's songs have enough hooks to capture listeners who have short attention spans, and they also borrow from blue-eyed soul and boogie—though they approach those styles holistically, not by nicking a drum sound here and a keyboard lick there. Plus if you close your eyes and focus on ➔

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MUSIC

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Lee "Scratch" Perry & the Subatomic Sound System © RENATA STEINER

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Farbe's sorrowful vocals on the waterlogged ballad "Is It Her?," you can hear strains of the 1980 album *McCartney II*—Video Age have baked the DNA of Macca's unconventional power pop into their material. —LEOR GALIL

MIGUEL ZENÓN QUARTET

See *Pick of the Week*, page 42. 8 and 10 PM, Jazz Showcase, 806 S. Plymouth, \$25-\$45. 🎧

SATURDAY21

STEVE LEHMAN TRIO 8:30 PM, Constellation, 3111 N. Western, \$20. 18+

In 1987, free-jazz originator Ornette Coleman named an album *In All Languages*; fellow alto saxophonist Steve Lehman, who began his career around 15 years later, seems to have taken that title as a challenge to be met at every turn. On his own records, Lehman has crossbred jazz with spectral and minimalist composition, English and Senegalese rap, and electroacoustic improvisation. As a sideman, he has lent his pungent tone and thoughtful responsiveness to the music of artists as diverse as Anthony Braxton, Jason Moran, and Meshell Ndegeocello. But in his trio with bassist Matt Brewer and drummer Damion Reid, Lehman engages with the jazz tradition, riding its imperatives of swing and personal invention into the 21st century. Working with his own tunes and compositions by Duke Pearson, Jackie McLean, Kenny Kirkland, and Autechre, Lehman unpacks elaborate, convoluted phrases while navigating an ever-changing rhythmic landscape at breakneck speed. Pianist Craig Taborn joins the trio on their new album, *The People I Love* (Pi), adding extra layers of harmonic and melodic complexity, but they will perform without him tonight. —BILL MEYER

MIGUEL ZENÓN QUARTET See *Pick of the Week*, page 42. 8 and 10 PM, Jazz Showcase, 806 S. Plymouth, \$25-\$45. 🎧

SUNDAY22

MIGUEL ZENÓN QUARTET See *Pick of the Week*, page 42. 4, 8, and 10 PM, Jazz Showcase, 806 S. Plymouth, \$25-\$45. 🎧

MONDAY23

DISCUS Claude, Hue, and Pool Holograph DJs open. 8:30 PM, Empty Bottle, 1035 N. Western. 21+ FREE

Chicago has plenty of workhorses among its young indie rockers, but few of them can grind like brothers Jake and Paul Stolz. That's partly because they're inseparable musically: they make up the rhythm section for pop-minded five-piece Varsity, and they both play in arty foursome Pool Holograph (Jake on drums and Paul on guitar). A couple years ago the Stolzes decided to launch a band where they could take the lead, and their four-piece, Discus, debuted in 2018 with *EP* (Middle Distance), which showed their grasp of slightly rambunctious slacker rock. But their brand-new debut full-length, *Something Has Happened* (the first cassette release from Sunroom, a print studio run by Jake Stolz and Metro art director Clare Byrne), strikes out toward the frontiers of that stylistic territory. Joined by bassist Kevin Fairbairn and drummer Arthur Velez (both of indie rockers Clearance), the Stolz brothers keep the languorous spirit of their early recordings intact, but they also rein in their rocking by binding it to intimate, minimal postpunk. Though Discus still get loud on *Something Has Happened*, even edging toward a full-fledged racket on the glimmering



Lil Keed COURTESY THE ARTIST

single “Prodigal Son,” the album works because it captures a variety of moods. I’m especially keen on their most skeletal arrangements: on “(Center)” they marry tinny keyboard percussion and threadbare guitars in an engrossing meditation. —**LEOR GALIL**

WEDNESDAY²³

ACID KING Wizard Rifle and Warish open. 7 PM, Reggie’s Rock Club, 2105 S. State, \$20. 17+

MUSIC

Disaffected teenagers hanging out at the forest preserve to smoke and solve the world’s problems couldn’t ask for a better soundtrack than 1999’s *Busse Woods*, the third album by San Francisco stoner-doom band Acid King. Guitarist and singer Lori S., the only constant member, founded the group in 1993 with drummer Joey Osborne and bassist Peter Lucas. Lori is a Chicagoland native, and *Busse Woods* is named for the forest preserve outside Elk Grove Village that served as her chamber of secrets during her rocker teen years. Acid King haven’t received the sort of crossover interest that other early stoner-rock bands have enjoyed over the past five years, but they’re one of the longest-running names in the genre and perfectly embody its primordial beginnings. Since 2017, Lori has been joined by bassist Rafa Martinez (of the formidable duo Black Cobra) and drummer Bil Bowman, and the trio’s tight onstage interplay showcases their complex riffing within a solid foundation of gnarly doom. To celebrate the 20th anniversary of *Busse Woods*, Acid King will play the album in its entirety at each show on this tour, and they’ll be selling new vinyl and CD reissues from RidingEasy, which will include lyric sheets and a historical “making of” insert. Whether you’ve been listening to noisy doom since the Pleistocene or just discovered it, you owe it to yourself to see Lori S. command the stage at least once. —**SALEM COLLO-JULIN**

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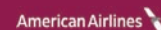
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25



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29



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4th Ave, Jagmac 11/2, 8 PM, Lincoln Hall [ALB](#)
999, the Clap, Bad Sons 11/2, 8 PM, Reggies' Music Joint
Actors, Bootblacks, New Canyons, Bellwether Syndicate DJs 10/20, 8:30 PM, Empty Bottle
American Football 12/29, 9 PM, Schubas, 18+
American Football 12/30, 9 PM; 12/31, 10:30 PM, Schubas
Avery Sunshine 12/30, 8 PM; 12/31, 7:30 and 11 PM; 1/1/20, 5 PM, City Winery, on sale Fri 9/20, noon [ALB](#)
Bad Plus 12/6, 7 PM, Maurer Hall, Old Town School of Folk Music, on sale Fri 9/20, 9 AM [ALB](#)
Jason Bonham's Led Zeppelin Evening 11/18, 7:30 PM, Rialto Square Theatre, Joliet [ALB](#)
Bridal Party 10/6, 8:30 PM, Hideout
Teri Bristol, Psycho-Bitch 10/18, 10 PM, Smart Bar
Cage the Elephant, Angels & Airwaves 12/11, 7 PM, Aragon Ballroom, 17+
Capitol Sun Rays 12/1, 8 PM, SPACE, Evanston, on sale Fri 9/20, 10 AM [ALB](#)
Charly Bliss, Cherry Glazerr, Girl K 12/28, 8:30 PM, Lincoln Hall, on sale Fri 9/20, 10 AM, 18+
Cherry Glazerr, Charly Bliss, Girl K 12/27, 7:30 PM, Lincoln Hall, on sale Fri 9/20, 10 AM [ALB](#)
Countess Williams 10/5,

4 PM, Checkerboard Lounge Chicago [ALB](#)
Sarah Davachi with Liz Deitemyer & Matthew Oliphant 10/5, 8 PM, Rockefeller Memorial Chapel [FREE](#)
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Ewelina Lisowska, Sarsa 9/28, 8 PM, Copernicus Center [ALB](#)
Fire-Toolz, BBsitters Club, Giant Claw, Seth Graham 9/28, 9:30 PM, Hideout
Samantha Fish, Nicholas David 11/29, 8 PM, Thalia Hall, 17+
David Foster, Katharine McPhee 5/9/20, 8 PM, Chicago Theatre, on sale Fri 9/20, 10 AM [ALB](#)
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Half Moon Run, Taylor Janzen 1/24/20, 9 PM, Lincoln Hall, on sale Fri 9/20, 10 AM, 18+
Anthony Hamilton 11/23, 8 PM, the Venue at Horseshoe Casino, Hammond
Colin Hay 3/28/20, 8 PM, Thalia Hall [ALB](#)
Hellhole 2 with DJ Cqchfruit, DJ Pluto, DJ Speedsick, and more 10/5, 9 PM, Empty Bottle
Herobust, Yookie, Infinte 11/23, 9 PM, Riviera Theatre, on sale Fri 9/20, 10 AM, 18+
Hi-Rez, Emilio Rojas, Loud Mouth, Spacecadet, Books, Mentality 12/13, 8 PM, Beat Kitchen, 17+

Hollow Coves, Harrison Storm 2/17/20, 8 PM, Schubas, 18+
Hot Sardines 11/17, 7 PM, Maurer Hall, Old Town School of Folk Music, on sale Fri 9/20, 9 AM [ALB](#)
I Fight Dragons, Violet Crime, Secret Bad Boy 12/21, 9 PM, Lincoln Hall, on sale Fri 9/20, 18+
In Flames, Red 11/24, 7 PM, Concord Music Hall, on sale Fri 9/20, 10 AM, 17+
Jeezy 11/12, 8 PM, Riviera Theatre, 18+
Johnny Utah 11/11, 8 PM, Schubas, on sale Fri 9/20, 9 AM, 18+
Kaivon 12/7, 8:30 PM, Chop Shop, 18+
Keane 3/20/20, 8 PM, Cadillac Palace Theatre, on sale Fri 9/20, 10 AM [ALB](#)
Marcus King Band 12/14-12/15, 8 PM, Thalia Hall, 17+
Bettye LaVette 12/6, 7 PM, Maurer Hall, Old Town School of Folk Music, on sale Fri 9/20, 9 AM [ALB](#)
Ledisi 10/4, 8 PM, the Venue at Horseshoe Casino, Hammond
Chris Ligon CD Release and Variety Show with Flat Five, Sharon Rutledge, and more 11/8, 8 PM, FitzGerald's, Berwyn, on sale Fri 9/20, 11 AM
Little Boots 11/7, 8 PM, Sleeping Village
Lophiile, Hxry 11/21, 9 PM, Schubas, 18+
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Maze featuring Frankie Beverly, Loose Ends 9/27, 8 PM, the Venue at Horseshoe Casino, Hammond
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J.D. McPherson, Joel Paterson 12/19, 8 PM, Thalia Hall, 17+
Methmatics, Lollygagger,

Indonesian Junk, Puffins 10/19, 10 PM, Liar's Club
Jane Monheit 12/4, 8 PM, City Winery, on sale Fri 9/20, noon [ALB](#)
Moonlight Disco featuring Tiger & Woods 10/11, 9 PM, Cerise Rooftop at Virgin Hotels Chicago
Mumford & Sons, Local Natives 12/14, 7:30 PM, Aragon Ballroom, 17+
Sequoyah Murray, Loona Dae, Cae Monae 10/4, 9:30 PM, Hideout
Nile, Terrorizer, Blood of the Wolf, Central Disorder 11/13, 7:30 PM, the Forge, Joliet [ALB](#)
O.A.R. 12/4-12/5, 7:30 PM, the Vic, on sale Fri 9/20, 10 AM, 18+
Obituary, Abbath 10/12, 7 PM, the Forge, Joliet [ALB](#)
O'Jays, Peabo Bryson 10/5, 8 PM, the Venue at Horseshoe Casino, Hammond
Pentatonix 12/18-12/19, 7 PM, Rosemont Theatre, Rosemont, on sale Fri 9/20, 10 AM [ALB](#)
Powrót Manru with Dmytro Tkachenko & Lviv National Philharmonic Choir & Orchestra 10/6, 6 PM, Copernicus Center [ALB](#)
Real Estate 10/22, 8 PM, Lincoln Hall, on sale Fri 9/20, 10 AM, 18+
Rebirth Brass Band 1/18/20, 8:30 PM, SPACE, Evanston [ALB](#)
Retirement Party, Obsessives 10/30, 8 PM, Subterranean, 17+
Rich Robbins, Wyatt Waddell, Musa Reems 9/30, 8:30 PM, Empty Bottle [FREE](#)
Rynx 11/14, 8 PM, Metro, on sale Fri 9/20, noon [ALB](#)
Raphael Saadiq 2/21/20, 7:30 PM, the Vic, on sale Fri 9/20, 10 AM, 18+
Saint Jhn, Kodie Shane 11/21, 7 PM, Bottom Lounge [ALB](#)
Sampa the Great 4/3/20, 9 PM, Schubas, on sale Fri 9/20, 10 AM, 18+
Ski Mask the Slump God, Puoya, DJ Scheme, Danny Towers 11/22, 7 PM, Riviera Theatre [ALB](#)
Sloan 11/20, 8 PM, Bottom Lounge, 17+
Sports 10/3, 10:15 PM, Schubas, 18+
Allen Stone's Karaoke Extravaganza 10/24, 8 PM, SPACE, Evanston, on sale Fri 9/20, 10 AM [ALB](#)
Tender, Xylo 2/18/20, 7:30 PM, Lincoln Hall [ALB](#)
Reggie Thomas Trio 10/4, 8 PM, Studios, Evanston
Thrice, Mewithoutyou, Drug Church 1/31/20, 6 PM, Concord Music Hall, on sale Fri 9/20, noon, 17+
Tove Lo, Alma 2/19/20, 7:30 PM, Riviera Theatre, on sale Fri 9/20, 10 AM [ALB](#)
Trans-Siberian Orchestra 12/30, 2:30 and 8 PM, Allstate Arena, Rosemont [ALB](#)

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Tropidelic 12/27, 8 PM, Beat Kitchen, 17+
Turnover & Men I Trust, Renata Zeiguer 12/6, 7:30 PM, Metro [ALB](#)
Twenty One Pilots, I Don't Know How But They Found Me 12/13, 7:30 PM, Aragon Ballroom, 17+
White Reaper 12/21, 8 PM, Metro, on sale Fri 9/20, noon [ALB](#)
Wicca Phase Springs Eternal, Glitterer, Anxious, Creeks 12/13, 6 PM, Subterranean [ALB](#)
Wilco 12/15-12/16, 7:30 PM; 12/18-12/19, 7:30 PM, Chicago Theatre, on sale Fri 9/20, 10 AM [ALB](#)
Pete Yorn, Day Wave 11/19, 7:30 PM, Metro, on sale Fri 9/20, 10 AM, 18+
Ben Zaidi 11/25, 7:30 PM, Schubas [ALB](#)

UPDATED

070 Shake 2/26, 8 PM, Bottom Lounge, date changed; previously purchased tickets for 10/2 will be honored, 17+
Gordon Lightfoot 9/27, 8 PM, Copernicus Center, canceled, show will be rescheduled for early 2020; tickets purchased for 9/27 will be honored [ALB](#)

UPCOMING

Cher, Nile Rodgers & Chic 11/27, 7:30 PM, United Center [ALB](#)
Muna, Chelsea Jade 10/17, 7:30 PM, Logan Square Auditorium [ALB](#)
Mystical Arts of Tibet with singers of Drepung Loseling Monastery 9/28, 8 PM, Fermilab, Batavia [ALB](#)
Nana Grizol, Lee Bains III & the Glory Fires 10/1, 8:30 PM, Empty Bottle
Napalm Death & Municipal Waste, Sick of it All 10/17, 7 PM, Metro, 18+
Phantoms, Sachi 10/25, 7 PM, Chop Shop, 18+
Jay Som, Gia Margaret 10/18, 8 PM, Lincoln Hall [ALB](#)
Waterboys 9/29, 5 and 8 PM, Maurer Hall, Old Town School of Folk Music [ALB](#)
Mike Watt & the Missingmen 10/2, 8 PM, Schubas
Kelly Willis, Bruce Robinson 11/2, 10 PM, SPACE, Evanston [ALB](#) [ALB](#)



GOSSIP WOLF

A furry ear to the ground of the local music scene

WHEN LOLLYGAGGER debuted last summer with the EP *Life on Terminus*, Gossip Wolf was smitten with their delightfully cartoonish melding of glam and alt-rock. On Saturday, October 19, the band release a new sketch-comedy-style video album, *The Lollygagger Family Fun Variety Hour* (via local label **Midwest Action**)—and though there aren't any cartoons, what family wouldn't enjoy seeing **Lollygagger** jamming out while dressed as hot dogs and condiment bottles, performing dramatic readings from *The Ethical Slut*, or hosting "God" for a live Twitter Q&A? The goofy video for **"A.C. Ripple,"** which gets pretty literal about the birds and the bees, just dropped this week—it's the perfect blend of Sir David Attenborough and the Monkees! The band celebrate the album's release on Saturday, October 19, at **Liar's Club**.

Chicago rapper (and professional glassblower) **Solo Sam** proved himself one to watch with last summer's self-released *Itis* EP, and since then he's opened for Freddie Gibbs and Bone Thugs-n-Harmony. On Friday, September 20, Sam will drop *Plated*, an EP that showcases his evolving skills—he untangles knotty verses with a smooth delivery that's a perfect fit for his supple, R&B-tinged instrumentals. Sam will host a listening party at **Exchange 312** on Thursday, September 19, and release a companion cookbook, also called *Plated*, with twists on other people's recipes in addition to originals. If he's as good a cook as he is a rapper, then they'll be tasty!

Underground hip-hop label **Why? Records**, run by a collective of Chicago rappers, only just launched this year, but it's already a crucial part of the local scene. On Friday, September 20, **Davis Blackwell** (also half of Why? Records duo **Udababy**) drops his debut album, *Green Parakeet Suite*, which he's also calling *GPS*. Gossip Wolf has high hopes for this one—on the single **"Super Green,"** Davis chews up every second he's on the mike. —J.R. NELSON AND LEOR GALIL

Got a tip? Tweet @Gossip_Wolf or e-mail gossipwolf@chicagoreader.com.

OPINION

SAVAGE LOVE

Teach your children well

Advice for handling precocious bondage enthusiasts

By DAN SAVAGE

Q: My son has always liked handcuffs and tying people up as a form of play. He is 12 now, and the delight he finds in cuffing has not faded along with his love of Legos. He lobbied hard to be allowed to buy a hefty pair of handcuffs. We cautioned him strongly about consent and he has been good about it. In the last year, though, I found out that he is cuffing himself while alone in the house—and when discovered, he becomes embarrassed and insists it's a joke. I found him asleep one night with his wrists cuffed. I removed the cuffs and spoke to him the next morning about safety. Then recently, when returning home late, I saw him (through →

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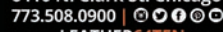
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OPINION

continued from 49
his window, from the back of the house) naked and cuffed with a leather belt around his waist, which seemed attached to the cuffs. This escalation was scarier. I haven't spoken to him about it. My concern about the bondage stuff is that there are some risks (like escaping a fire), particularly if he gets more adventurous (restricting breathing, etc). This is something he is doing secretly and alone. He is a smart kid, an athlete, and a fairly conscientious scholar. He has friends but sometimes feels lonely. He is going through puberty with its attendant madness, but he is also very loving and kind. He is also quite boastful, which I interpret as insecurity. I can't help feeling that this bondage stuff is related to these issues, and I worry about self-esteem and self-loathing. —**COMPLETELY UNDERSTANDABLE FEARS FOR SON**

A: When a concerned parent reaches out to an advice columnist with a question like yours, CUFFS, the columnist is supposed to call in the child psychologists. But I thought it might be more interesting—I actually thought it might be more helpful—if I shared your letter with a different class of experts: adult men who were tying themselves up when they were 12 years old.

"This boy sounds a lot like how I was at his age," said James "Jimmy" Woelfel, a bondage porn star. "I want to reassure CUFFS that the discovery of things like this, even at a young age, is extremely common. We may not know why we like this stuff at the time, we just know we do."

Jimmy is correct: Many adults who are into bondage, heavy or otherwise, became aware of their bondage kinks at a very early age.

"The vast majority of

BDSM practitioners report that their sexual interests developed relatively early in life, specifically before the age of 25," Justin Lehmler wrote in a recent post on his invaluable Sex and Psychology blog. "Further, a minority of these folks (between 7 and 12 percent across studies) report that their interests actually developed around the time of puberty (ages ten through 12), which is when other traditional aspects of sexual orientation develop (e.g., attraction based on sex/gender)."

While an obsession with handcuffs at age six isn't proof a kid is going to grow up with an erotic interest in bondage—lots of kids like to play cops and robbers—a boy who's cuffing himself in the throes of puberty and doing so in the nude and in secret ... yeah, that boy is almost certainly going to be into bondage when he grows up. And that boy is also going to be embarrassed when his parents discover him in handcuffs for the exact same reason a boy is going to be embarrassed when his parents walk in on him masturbating—because he's having a private sexual experience that he really doesn't want to discuss with his parents.

As for your son's insecurities and loneliness, they're more likely a reaction to the shame he feels about his kinks than to the kinks themselves.

"It's not always sexual, and it's almost never a symptom of self-loathing—and a counselor will not 'erase' a taste for bondage," said Trikoot, a self-described "bondage fanatic" and occasional kink educator from Helsinki, Finland. "Too many kinksters had young lives full of shame and hiding, only to accept themselves years later and then discover what they've missed out on."

In other words, CUFFS, parents and counselors can't talk a child out of his kinks

any more than they can talk a child out of his sexual orientation. This stuff is hardwired. And once someone accepts his kinks, whatever anxiety he feels about them eventually evaporates.

"I was extremely embarrassed when my mom caught me," said Jimmy. "She didn't know how to respond and neither did I at the time. We merely went on as if it never happened. But it was somewhat comforting to know there wasn't going to be a major backlash. It was better than living in fear."

With the burden of knowing comes the responsibility—not just to educate and warn, but to offer your son a little hope for his future.

"There are boundaries that should never be crossed, such as solo breath play, which regularly kills even experienced adults," said Trikoot. "But dabbling with wrist and ankle restraints while being within shouting distance of the rest of the family is not a serious safety issue."

Now for the tricky and super awkward and what will definitely feel somewhat age-inappropriate part: At some point—maybe in a year or two—you need to let your son know that he has a community out there.

"When done safely, bondage/kink can be an extremely rewarding experience as he grows into adulthood," said Jimmy. "Some of the most important people in my life are those whom I've shared this love with. It is nothing to be ashamed of—though at his age, it is unfortunately inevitable. How you react can help mitigate such a reaction."

Oh, and stop peeping in your son's bedroom window at night. That's creepy. **✂**

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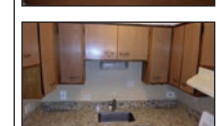
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STATE OF ILLINOIS, PUBLICATION NOTICE OF COURT DATE FOR REQUEST FOR NAME CHANGE. Location Cook County - County Division - Case Type: Name Change from Saidah Annitra Davis to Saidah Annitra Adjoa Akun Court Date 11/12/2019, 9:30 AM in Courtroom #1702 Case # 2019CONC001178 (10/03)

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON IN AND FOR THE COUNTY OF KING, JUVENILE DEPARTMENT IN RE THE DEPENDENCY

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IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON IN AND FOR THE COUNTY OF KING, JUVENILE DEPARTMENT IN RE THE DEPENDENCY

OF: TIE'LAJIAH PITTMAN DOB: 03/15/13

NO: 19-7-01908-3 KNT NOTICE OF HEARING

TO: * Nicholas Pittman, Alleged Father; Unknown Father, and/or anyone claiming parental/paternal rights or interest in the child and to All Whom It May Concern:

On June 21, 2019, a petition for Dependency was filed in the above entitled Court, pursuant to RCW 13.34.080 and/or RCW 26.33.310 regarding the above named child, whose parents are Tiesha Turner and *.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, CALL 253-372-5738, 8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.]

Said Petition will be heard on October 29, 2019, at the hour of 8:15 a.m., at King County Superior Court, Juvenile Department, 401 4th Ave North, Kent, WA 98032, before a judge of the above entitled court, at which time you are directed to appear and answer the said petition or the petition will be granted and action will be taken by the court such as shall appear to be for the welfare of the said child.

Dated September 3, 2019. BARBARA MINER KING COUNTY SUPERIOR COURT CLERK BY: AMD, Deputy Clerk (09/26)



The Chicago Housing Authority (CHA) is releasing proposed updates to the HCV Program Admin Plan and ACOP for public comment.

The 30-day public comment period begins Sept 11 (8 a.m.) and ends October 10, 2019 (5 p.m.). While CHA encourages and welcomes all program participants, residents, and the community-at-large to review the proposed updates to the HCV Admin Plan and ACOP, you are not required to attend the public comment hearings in order to submit comments. Your presence or absence at the hearing does not affect your housing.

The dates, times, and locations of the public comment hearings are as follows:

- September 26, 2019, 6:00 pm: Family Investment Center (FIC), 4859 S Wabash
- October 1, 2019, 11:00 am: Hattie Callner Apts, 855 W Aldine

Public housing residents, HCV participants, and the public may submit comments on the Proposed Admin Plan and ACOP during the public comment period. The 30-day comment period begins September 11 and ends October 10, 2019. All comments must be received by October 10, 2019.

Copies of the Proposed HCV Admin Plan and ACOP will be available beginning September 11 through October 10, 2019 at the following locations:

• CHA and HCV Administrative Offices	60 E Van Buren St
• Family Investment Center (FIC)	4859 S Wabash St
• Central Advisory Council Office	243 E 32nd St
• HCV Regional Office- South	10 W 35th St
• HCV Regional Office-West	1852 S Albany Ave
• Erie Neighborhood House:	4225 W 25th St
	Little Village West Town
• Spanish Coalition for Housing:	1922 N Pulaski Rd
	North Office 1915 S Blue Island
	South Office 9010 S Commercial

Mail, E-mail or Fax comments to:
Chicago Housing Authority
Attention: Proposed HCV Admin Plan & ACOP
60 E. Van Buren Street, 12th Floor
commentontheplan@thecha.org
Fax 312.913.7837

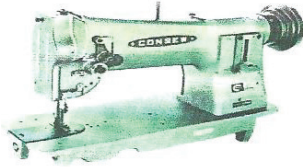
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